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MISCELLANEOUS

WORKS AND NOVELS

OF

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NEW EDITION.

VOL. IV.

CONTAINING

THE MONKS OF [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

1824.

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THE

MISCELLANEOUS

WORKS AND NOVELS

OF

R. C. DALLAS, ESQ.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

A NEW EDITION.

VOL. III.

CONTAINING

THE SECOND VOLUME OF PERCIVAL.

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A.

T. DAVISON, Lombard-street,
Whitefriars, London.

PERCIVAL;

OR,

NATURE VINDICATED.

A man's nature runs either to herbs or weeds; therefore let him seasonably water the one, and destroy the other.

BACON.

VOL. II.

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PERCIVAL.

LETTER LVI.

MRS. BEVIL TO JULIA.

An effusion of maternal joy—Different situations in society—Personal resemblances—Charles Percival

My dear Girl,

I HAVE received your long letter, which deserves double thanks for its being written before I answered the last, and those again doubled for the length of it, and for the many interesting points it contains. Your father and I have read your letters with a variety of sensations; but one delight never fails; the justness of our Julia's reasoning and acting, her sweet attentions to her parents, her piety, and her dependence upon her God. Be assured, my love, that, "your help cometh of him who preserves "them that are true of heart;" and I trust your Edward's sister will also receive that help which is given to true-heartedness.

Your account of Stanley is very extraordinary; but after the proofs you have had, I cannot imagine what further doubt Towers can entertain. As for

me I have none, because I have known menial servants catch the manners of their masters to that perfection, that out of their places it would de difficult to distinguish them: not but that I am delighted with this young man's character in most respects. However, it is certain he has worn a livery: Sir Richard Brainless and General Tankerville both agreeing as to his name and description, makes it clear, and I admire and applaud Miss Percival for her resolution. Her observation is charming; it would have become the lips of one twice her age, and I have no doubt that her reason will prevail over the hasty prepossession of her heart. The degradation that attends a woman who marries a man in the lower stations of life is not a prejudice, Julia; for though it is possible for one of the meanest condition to rise in virtue and merit beyond many of those who receive more honour from high birth than they reflect upon it, yet it so seldom happens, that the solitary exceptions make no alteration in the general nature of vulgar spirits; and it is very remarkable that nothing but humility can render even those exceptions supportable. A man stepping from a mean condition, and proudly demanding the reward of his merits, is a very disgusting object to reason. If Stanley were to aspire to Caroline's hand, I should despise as much as I now admire him; and were she to listen only to the suggestions of her fancy, her name, as she justly says, would become the dread of her friends; and let me add, the butt of the world. But do not mistake me, my dear Julia; I alluded only to the nature of society; for the Utopian system that is now furnishing some of the French orators with fine talk, must end in vapour, and gradations must ever exist; but as to virtue, God is no respecter of persons; and I do not hesitate to say with Lord Powic, that I should

not have been sorry if he had placed Stanley in the shoes of Lord Chopstone, and had disposed of his Lordship among the logicians of the Convention.

Stanley's resemblance to Lord Coteridge is extraordinary, yet there are instances of persons being so alike as to be taken for each other. A mistake of this kind very lately occurred in this neighbourhood. The beautiful and amiable Fanny Dalston, whom you have so often admired as a child, is soon to be married. The gentleman who is paying his addresses to her going to Mrs. Dalston's, on his return from an excursion, saw a youth in the parlour whom he absolutely mistook for Fanny, supposing it a joke of the family who introduced her as her brother. "You cannot impose upon me," said he. Mrs. Dalston told me it would have been easy to have continued the deception some time, had she not felt an immediate repugnance to the idea of its being supposed that Fanny could appear before him in boy's clothes. She seriously assured him it was her son who had come from Westminster school to spend his holidays with her, and his sister entering at the same time convinced him. This, however, is a resemblance of very near relations, and it must be owned it is still more surprising where there is no family connexion, it being impossible that there can be any between Lord Coteridge and Stanley.

We pity poor Lord Powic: his error was not so unnatural as to deserve the name of parricide. Despotic principles, strong passions, and even parental affection in one point of view, guided him to oppose the wishes of his son, whose passions, on the other hand, it must be allowed, were so ungovernable as to render him forgetful or negligent of his father's peace of mind. The old Earl's grief and penitence have been too deep and durable, and have been sustained by that romantic heat of imagination

which suggested the studied apparatus of gloom and horror you describe in the account of your visit to the black chamber. The effect produced by Stanley on the Earl was very natural, and I should not be surprised if it led to the making of the young man's fortune. I hope he will merit it by his prudence. Although I agree with you in thinking that it is not your part to expose his condition, I think, and so does your father, that he ought himself to make it known; the confession would be a great feather in his cap, whereas an accidental or malicious discovery would prove his ruin. We would have Towers hint this to him; and your father, who is answering Towers's letter, means to advise it.

I cannot express to you, my dear Julia, what pain we have felt for Edward, on account of his brother. Added to the information you have given us, we have had some sad intelligence of Charles since his arrival at Cheltenham, from Mr. Fortescue, who has just left the place, and who spent the day with us on Saturday last. Tempted by a run of good luck at hazard to stake largely, he finished by losing a very considerable sum, for which he was under the necessity of offering his own notes, which were at first rejected, on his friend Sir Richard Brainless refusing to indorse them when applied to by the winners. Charles was at once angry at the application, which was unwarranted by him, and hurt at the refusal. Not being able to give cash, the fortunate gamesters, with some insolence, took the notes, and he suddenly left Cheltenham without giving notice of his intention to Sir Richard, in whose company he went. A breach with the Baronet is a happy event; but how mortifying must it be to any man of spirit to stand exposed to such indignities! how dreadful to any one of principle the reflection of ruin, brought on by such irrational propensities!

Tell our dear Edward that we beseech him not to allow his brother's irregularities and misfortunes to oppress a heart so dear to us, the cheerfulness and felicity of which he is under bonds to his Julia, to his darlings, and to his friends, to support. Ruin, and I fear only ruin, will awaken Charles from this sleep of his reason; but comfort Edward with the thought that when he does awake, he will have it in his power to lead him to rational happiness and to virtue. Adieu, my love! We look forward with delight to the time of your coming to the lodge. Mr. Stanhope, from your account of him, will be a welcome visitor. Our loves to Caroline, and a thousand kisses to our dear little Edward and Julia.

LETTER LVII.

SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS TO JOHN STANHOPE, ESQ.

Charles Percival—Some of his companions—The friendship of gamesters—A conundrum.

Dear Stanny,

CHARLEY Percival is off in a huff—damn it, he is in the wrong—I'll tell thee all how and about it. The day we left *the Methodist's*, he was in the dumps all the morning. I never saw him so low before. We took a snap at Burford just to bait the horses, but still he was *down in the mouth*, and once after a long silence, he *damned the inventor of dice;* but on leaving Northleach, where we dined and stowed away *a couple of bottles*, he began to revive, and afore we got to Cheltenham he was as hearty as ever, and *as merry as a grig*.

Here, besides the lads I told you of, we met

Arthur Bradley, Tim Gosling, and Benny Bigland, choice spirits all. We kept it up like hearties *for several days*, and Charley was the best company in the world. One night his winnings at hazard amounted to upwards of *four thousand pounds*, but the very next night he lost two, and the night after *five thousand* more, by which he sat down *three* minus. Damn it, I shall never forget how bluddy black he looked. He had not *the cash*, and could not draw—damn'd awkward dilemma, Stanny—so he offered *his notes*—but the fellows with a sneer, said they'd rather have the cash or checks on a banker. The chief of the money was lost to the two Hustles, and that dirty fellow Barwick, with his powdered bush-wig sticking over his gander profile, who always backs them. Damn his mustard-pot soul, what should he take into his head to say but that he would take the notes *if Sir Richard would indorse 'um*. There was a dead silence for a minute: but the pepper-hearted goose would not be so answered, and so coming up to me, he says, "Sir "Richard, will you indorse your friend's notes?"—*Damned awkward thing for me*, wasn't it, Stanny? Says I, "Mr. Barwick, Sir, your wig's a knowing "one."—"Pshaw!" cried Charley, and looked at me as if he could eat me *without salt:* then turning to the people, he told 'um he thought they had known him better than to have a doubt. "Oh! "we have *no doubt*, Mr. Percival;" said gander-face, "but you know"—"In short," replied Charley, stopping the vinegar-mouthed ape, "there's "no help for it at present: you *must* take the notes, "because the truth is, I can't settle it otherwise "for the moment, but I will see that they shall re-"main but a very little time in your hands, so gen-"tlemen come along with me into another room." Little gander-face could not help *casting a sheep's*

eye towards me. "Won't you come too, Sir Richard?" said he. "I would take Percival's notes for ten "thousand pounds," says I; "but," says I, "its a "rule"—"*Rule!*" cried Charley, stopping me; "*rule! damn rule!* its cousin-german *to sentiment:* "Come, gentlemen." And away he bounced, followed by gander-face and the Hustles.

Next morning he ordered his horses, and went off without saying a word to me or any of the party. Now, Stanny, this is very foolish of Charley, for I no more meant to affront him than I do *to cut my own throat:* and its ungrateful into the bargain, for wasn't I scheming *to bring him into Parliament*, and didn't I intend to employ *all my interest* with my uncle, Lord Dolt? and so I will still, for I don't intend to let him quarrel with me, let him be ever so minded.

Did you hear my conundrum as we drove off from the Elms door? *Why is a good wheel like an orator's buckle?* Mind you answer this in your next. How is Mouse and the wimmen? Both fine creatures, but *Mamzell for me* in spite of your taste. How much longer are you going to stay with them? and what are you about? Have you seen *my man George?* But you don't know him: he had left me *before you came to England.* It was a brave thing of his to fight *the mad bull.* I hope *the methodist* will not only call *upon the Lord,* but upon *his purse,* to provide for him. Write before I leave Cheltenham, which will be in about a week.

Yours, &c.

RICHARD BRAINLESS.

LETTER LVIII.

JOHN STANHOPE, ESQ. TO SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS, BART.

Fashionable friendship—Remark on Sir Richard's style—Stanley—Julia and Caroline—The first insensible movements of seduction—Retreat and hopes of a seducer—Mrs. Stormont—Madame de St. Valeri—The conundrum given up.

My dear Sir Richard,

I AM more and more grieved for poor Charles, and am inclined for his sake to say Amen to his curse on the inventor of dice. I think, however, he has no right to be affronted with you: it is no breach of friendship not to indorse a friend's notes, and I know you love him, and so do I, and we'll manage to bring him about, if he is not entirely done up; which, by the by, I am certain he is. His brother, into whose confidence I have made my way, says it is impossible to supply a gamester; that he would share his fortune with him as a brother distressed; but that a gamester's wants are endless, and would ruin twenty fortunes.

Let me tell you, Sir Dick, that you are improving in your literary style. Your epithets become more and more apposite and striking: mustard-pot soul, pepper-hearted goose, vinegar-mouthed ape, are so delightfully expressive of a malicious, inflexible, money-getting imp, in short, so descriptive of gander-face Barwick, that I wish from my soul your letter had been written to the late elegant Horatio, that it might have descended to posterity in an unextinguishable blaze of literary fire.

Mouse and the ladies are well. We are at Woodville, where I received your letter. You must know

I suspect that the family left the Elms on account of Stanley, who by the way has a very gentlemanlike appearance. They know he is not a person to be introduced, yet they are so scrupulous in their gratitude that they cannot bear the idea of giving him room to suspect they would keep him at a distance. The matter would have been easily managed if he had been still in his livery; but you are to know, Sir Dick, that George has stepped into a fortune by the death of an uncle, who was an exciseman, and has already assumed all the airs of an independent gentleman: though hang it, I do him injustice too, for he has really endeavoured to keep himself back, and said as much as he could without exactly confessing that he had been a footman. On the whole, Baronet, I think him a very extraordinary young man. He passed a day with us at Powic-castle, being absolutely compelled to it by the old Earl. His modesty averted all disgust, and his good sense pleased every body. It seems he bears a complete resemblance to Lord Powic's son, Lord Coteridge, who was killed at Bunker's-Hill in America. The old man fainted on seeing him, and afterwards carried us to a most curious mourning chamber in which he bewails the loss of his son, whose death sits heavy on his conscience: there the old man feeds his gloomy imagination by contemplating three pictures which are admirably well painted, and are relative to Lord Coteridge and his death. One is his portrait, and undoubtedly it bears a most striking likeness to Stanley.

The day after this visit, we left the Elms. I drove Mouse, who is a delightful creature, and I never had a more agreeable excursion. Percival sometimes rode on horseback, and sometimes in the coach with the ladies. A good part of the way I was favoured with the company of the one or the

other of the sisters. Mrs. Percival was in high spirits, and had on a travelling dress, the most becoming thing I ever saw. Sir Richard, I never beheld so fascinating a woman. The whole circle of mythological damsels afford me not an adequate comparison for her, Venus and Helen perhaps excepted, who are worn out, and I scorn to name them with the English Julia. On the other hand, for Caroline, whose spirits indeed were very low, a hundred nymphs and goddesses present themselves. Call her Hebe or Daphne, Proserpine or Pallas, Leda or Atalanta, and you will do her no injury.

But what signifies it to me that this Julia's form, features, and gestures are those of the mistress of Adonis, when her tongue is Penelope's, and her heart Diana's. I know you love learning, Sir Dick, and so I treat you: but in plain English I never saw any thing so lovely as Percival's wife, and consequently never was so in love before. On the road, having got rid of Towers, who was left at the Elms, I ventured a first slight advance beyond the progress of friendship. I talked of Petrarch and lamented his fate; I was inclined to accompany my lamentation with a sigh, but I saw in her face an intelligence that put me upon my guard. A sigh, Sir Dick, at that moment would have blown me up: the gentlest I could have heaved would have proved a whirlwind to Master Cupid; so I put it up for a future day, and launched forth in the praise of the prudence and conjugal fidelity of Laura.

This beauty, Brainless, is no prude; but she is, what's a great deal worse, in love with her husband, and also with virtue. I shall quit the field as the winter comes on, for I am convinced there is too much force in array against me at present. Some lucky alteration may take place before the spring;

her husband may fall in love with another woman, or she herself slide into a taste for novelty; he may be engrossed by the cares of humanity, or she take a liking to champagne. In the meantime, while they bill and coo a little longer, I shall pay a visit to the less rigid dame of Kent, and be with you in town by the meeting of parliament.

I have had letters from Oaks and Blake, who tell me they have seen Mrs. Stormont at Paris, where she is flaunting with a Mr. Rumbold, who is sufficiently attached to her, or rather to his own vanity, to be jealous of all the French levellers that speak to her. They also mention a Madame de St. Valeri, and ask me who she is. They say she is a beautiful young English woman who has been there some time, and generally attended by Lord Digby, who it is said accompanied her and her husband to Paris.

What can your conundrum be, Dicky? An orator has a tongue and so has a buckle, but I don't see what that has to do with a wheel. I have puzzled the Woodville party with it, and they give it up: the nave, the spokes, and the circle were all taken into consideration, but in vain. Illustrate, illustrate, dear Baronet, and believe me

Ever yours,

JOHN STANHOPE.

LETTER LIX.

SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS TO J. STANHOPE, ESQ.

The conundrum acknowledged to be a bad one—Mr. Timothy Gosling—Sir Richard admires Mr. Stanhope's learning—Encouragement for seduction—Sir Richard tells a story which fails in the application.

Dear Stanny,

I HAVE just time to tell you that I leave Cheltenham to-morrow, and that I spoiled *my conundrum*, if I said any thing about *a buckle* in it. It is bad enough as I meant it, for when I put it to Timmy Gosling—Why is an orator's tongue—it was the *damned tongue* I suppose that brought the *confounded buckle* into *my head* when I was writing to you in a hurry—why is an orator's tongue, Timmy, like a good wheel? Quoth Timmy, "that won't do, "Dicky, *it breaks Priscian's head.*"—"Breaks "Priscian's head!" says I; "what do you mean by "that?"—"Why," says he, "*the orator's tongue* "is, with the utmost latitude, *well spoken*, but the "wheel is *well spoked.*" Upon which we both laughed as if it had been the wittiest conundrum in the world. But when I asked Tim how that broke Priscian's head, he laughed and said, *Oh! never you mind.* Tim Gosling is but *a bit of a numskull;* that parcel of words whipt off his tongue without any meaning: the fellow often talks so. Now you, you Stanny, always know what you mean, and a nice clever letter hast thou sent me, full of learning. Venus, Helen, Hebe, Daphne, Proserpine, Pallas, Leda, Atalanta, Adonis, Penelope, Diana, Petrarch, Cupid and Laura. There's your *mythologistical know-*

ledge! Oh! Stanny, Stanny, what would I give for such a memory as you have?

Odd woman this Mrs. Percival! depend upon it she'll come to *by and by.* She has had *only plain-sailing*, as a Jack Tar would say: a little *rough weather* between her and hubby will make a deal of odds. This sea-water metaphor brings to my mind what I heard a Jack say to a little sailor-boy who was pursued by an old woman, *his mother I suppose*, with a stick. They were running *down hill;* the beldam was coming up fast with the lad: "Helm's "a lee, my hearty," says Jack, "*try the old B*— "*upon a wind.*" The urchin took his advice, turned up the hill *and distanced the old one.* But what's this? Does not it go quite *the contrary* to what I was saying about you and Mrs. Percival? Well, all you can say is, Brainless was in a hurry, and no wonder *he did not conceive clearly* when the subject was *a woman: there's for you.*

Good bye—direct your next *to Cloudcap Castle*, where I am going to drive Timmy Gosling in my curricle to see my uncle Lord Dolt.

Yours,

RICHARD BRAINLESS.

P. S. I shan't forget Charley's *seat in Parliament* at Cloud-cap castle, notwithstanding the ungracious fellow went off in a huff.

LETTER LX.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY.

Stanhope—Gallantry, with a word for the fair sex—Stanley—His unaccountable behaviour—Caroline refuses an offer of marriage.

Bevil lodge.

MONTHS have elapsed, my dear Lord, since I heard from you. Your last was written in the beginning of autumn from Brighton, and now our undressed trees and ruby-hawed fences tell me that hoary headed winter has grasped the sceptre of our hemisphere. You have left me too in total darkness as to the history of your blue-ey'd beauty and her Gallic lover. Since I knew of your being at Paris, I have had no doubt that your letters to me have been intercepted and opened, though I have no apprehension as to mine, which I have heard from your house, have been conveyed to you by private hands. I have this moment received a few lines from our friend Major Balfour, informing me that he is upon the eve of an excursion to the French metropolis, and I take the opportunity to send you a short letter, to request you will write to me by some more certain conveyance than the post is at present, and to remember that I have not received a single syllable from you since you landed in France.

The last packet * I dispatched to you was voluminous, containing a minute account of a day spent at Powic-castle, in which Stanley made a fine figure, and Chopstone an odious one. Since that day my time has been agreeably passed, but attended with few incidents that call for detail; and as I am uncertain how soon Balfour may set out, I shall restrain the garrulity of my pen to a brief narrative.

* Not inserted, the subject of it being so fully detailed in Julia's letter to her mother.

Led by an inclination to dive more into Stanley's mind and history, I did not attend the Percivals to Woodville, but remained at the Elms, as did also Mr. Stockton, who is employed upon a very interesting period of ecclesiastical history. The party were accompanied by Stanhope, who has rendered himself so amiable, that Edward and the whole family have formed an attachment to him. I almost hate myself, my Lord, for a suspicion that entered my brain. I knew Stanhope to be a man of fashion, and thought he had been too long fixed to one place to be without a view; nor was Caroline the magnet; yet he is so clever and so amiable that I deserve to be whipped for the thought, that had he dared he would have made love to Julia. Nay, I must be whipped for the next thought, which is, I almost wish he had. I wish gallants to understand the character of women: they usually attack vain creatures who have never formed principles, who consequently are easily seduced, and then forsooth, 'tis the nature of the sex,

And every woman is at heart a rake.

Oh! my Lord, my Lord, with what pleasure would I see every puppy cat-o'nine-tailed who twists his unmeaning lips and says, "women are light." The frailties of every idiotic Miss and Madam are blazoned in all the daily papers and periodical magazines, while the purity and domestic virtues of the generality of the sex are confined to the knowledge of the limited circle of friends which they honour and adorn.

But to my narrative: Stanhope went with the Percivals to Woodville, and I remained with Stockton at the Elms. I had promised Bevil to visit the lodge, but I retarded my journey full three weeks,

during which time I was almost constantly with Stanley, whom the more I knew the more I loved and admired, but I could never arrive at a knowledge of his genealogy, over which he kept an impenetrable veil. His grand object was the improvement of his mind, and on reading with him I found him much more advanced in classical knowledge than I could have supposed. But his bent was chiefly to metaphysical enquiries: the mind and its faults, spirit, good and evil, the human soul, and immortality, seem to have roused his attention, which he owned to me was checked and disappointed. "When "I study a mathematical problem," said he, "my "attention is rewarded, and I am satisfied in what I "wanted to know. When I have read my Ferguson or Newton for an hour, and made two or three "experiments, I find my understanding enlarged; "I have made myself master of something: but "when I endeavour to grasp the loftier topics of "thought, when I strive to ascend from matter to "intellect, the points elude my powers, I cannot "fix my hold, conviction wavers, I think, according "to the dictates of my heart, not as compelled by "demonstration. Yet after all," continued he, "I "cannot, in the one case, but compare myself to "a child delighted in taking his toys to pieces, to "find the springs and wires: and in the other, to a "mariner, who looks for land before he is well entered on his voyage: as the evening closes, his "fancy often rests upon an airy landscape which "the rising sun disperses; yet land is really before "him, which he will certainly reach, if he carefully "attend to the helm of his bark." I discouraged metaphysics for the present, and pursuing his own simile, I told him it was the mark of a raw seaman to be looking for land when he had hardly set sail; that the business on the voyage was to attend to

winds and courses, currents and rocks, the nature of the vessel, and the government of the helm: to sing a song occasionally, and to amuse vacant hours. In short, my Lord, I set him back to experiments, history, and poetry, and spent some very happy time with him.

In the first week we were two days at Powiccastle, in the second three days, in the third the Earl would have had us every day, but Stanley was too much in love with his books, his telescopes, and other instruments, to comply. He promised, however, when I left him, to be more with the old man, and kept his word, as the enclosed letter, which I received about ten days ago, will show, though the effect of it is not more lamented by Lord Powic than by me, for he is gone entirely from Cowper's; and I have neither heard from him nor can I trace him. The farmer, to whom I wrote, informs me that his things were directed to remain at a warehouse in London till called for. It is very remarkable that, although I wrote him an affectionate letter, he has never answered it: it is equally remarkable that he received no letters himself but mine while at the farm, and that he left no direction for any that might come.

I have an apprehension respecting this young man that I pray to Heaven may prove unfounded. He has at times, at least I have thought so, betrayed symptoms of an unsettled intellect. Notwithstanding his general animation on seeing me, I have observed him sink into a profound melancholy, from which he would burst into some poetical rhapsody. From several incoherent ejaculations, I should suppose General Tankerville had been his bitterest enemy, which cannot be, from the letter I received from the General, and which I sent you from the Elms. When I connect these observa-

tions with his confession on the first day I saw him of a repining spirit, I fear, I fear, my Lord, that, be the cause what it may, all is not right in the machine. His unaccountable behaviour to Lord Powic by no means diminishes the weight of my suspicion. How wonderful is man!

> A beam ethereal, sullied and absorb'd!
> An heir of glory! a frail child of dust!

As I have no hope of this young man's writing to me, I have requested a tradesman in town, who lives near the inn where his things are directed to remain, to endeavour to procure me an address by means of the person who may come for them. Whether my fear end in truth or not, I will not lose him if I can help it, nor without trying every thing to sooth and recover his mind; for let his condition in society be what it may, he possesses a spirit that will grace a higher sphere than this world can offer.

The Percivals are come to Bevil-lodge, and the Bevils are to return with them to spend the holidays at the Elms, where I shall also pass my Christmas. I must not forget to tell you, that while they were at Woodville, Chopstone went over and passed a week with them, during which he solicited the hand of Caroline, and was refused by her. As for Stanhope, he determined to shame my penetration, and though pressed to Bevil-lodge by all parties, excused himself, and took his leave at Woodville, some time before the family quitted it. Of Charles Percival I have, alas! bad tidings to give you, my Lord. He lost a large sum at Cheltenham, and not having cash or credit with his banker, gave his notes: not being able to acquit them, he disappeared. The holders applied to Edward, who took them up on condition of their being answerable to him for the sums, if they divulge the transaction.

Both reason and delicacy at present press this conduct on Edward, of whom every day gives me fresh proof that my early opinion was founded on a just observation of his nature and education. Adieu! my dear Lord, consider your arrears and discharge them speedily.

LETTER LXI.

EARL POWIC TO PHILIP TOWERS.

(*Enclosed in the preceding.*)

Stanley's inexplicable conduct at Powic-castle.

Dear Sir, Powic-castle.

A CIRCUMSTANCE has happened which gives me more pain than I can express to you. On your leaving the Elms, Mr. Stanley, according to his promise, indulged me with frequent visits, and after some time I flattered myself that I had rendered my house agreeable to his taste. He passed whole days and nights at the castle, delighted with the permission I gave him of doing as he pleased in my library. Dear Mr. Towers, I enjoyed a happiness in looking at him and talking with him, which, till our memorable meeting here, I could not have supposed it in the power of my whole fortune to purchase. He too seemed happy in general, though I have surprized him at times in fits of reverie and dejection: when I thought him studious, a sigh and a tear betrayed him. I endeavoured to gain his confidence without success; he never would mention his family to me. The most he ever said to

me on that subject was, that his father having little desire for knowledge himself, had cruelly neglected his education. I offered to procure him every assistance he could wish, which he declined, though not haughtily, saying, that his imagination was too apt to carry him beyond his pretensions, but that in his sober reflections he thought his time would be best bestowed in attaining agricultural knowledge.

Last week going unexpectedly into the little cabinet adjoining the library, which I had formerly furnished with subjects of natural history for Lord Coteridge, I caught Stanley in tears over a picture which he held in his hand, but which was suspended to his neck by a ribbon that allowed him to take it out of his bosom. He wiped his eyes and said, "My Lord, this is not fair." I assured him on my honour that it was accidental, and at the same time besought him not to deny me the comfort of consoling him. I asked him if love were the cause of his wretchedness, and if the portrait he wept over were the picture of his mistress? He turned it to me, and desired me to look at it. I never saw a lovelier face. I told him I did not wonder at his passion, for that the charms of the very picture had given a glow even to my old heart. "Let "me," I said, "who acted so wretched a part to "my own son, take this occasion to promote your "genuine effusions: let me remove whatever ob- "stacles lie between you and the object of your "affection; my purse, my influence, my friends, "shall be used to make you happy: there is no dif- "ficulty I will not conquer, unless, indeed, it be a "relentless, revengeful father." I could not help weeping, dear Mr. Towers, at the recollection of my own cruelty, and Stanley's agitation was redoubled. He kissed the picture, put it into his bo-

som, rose, pressed my hand, said his gratitude was unspeakable, but entreated me to say no more upon a subject which he assured me was hopeless. I was under the necessity of yielding, and we rode out together; but a gloom hung upon our countenances the whole morning.

We dined alone: after dinner our conversation had unusual intervals of silence, one of which I unluckily put an end to, by an allusion to the picture in his bosom: "You are thoughtful, Stanley," I said: "don't be angry with me, my dear boy, for "observing what infinite misery has been produced "by beauty." His answer was; "And you may "add, my Lord, by virtue; for if you allude to the "woman whose picture I wear, both were in her as "near perfection as human nature can attain."—"*Were!* Stanley;" I said, "are then your feelings "excited by one whose frailty has driven you from "her?"—"Frailty!" he replied, "yes, if new "sufferings and unarguing resignation, added to "virtue, make it frailty: no, my Lord, of the two "it is her beauty that has suffered; that, indeed, "has yielded something to the corroding tooth of "sorrow."—"The dear girl!" I answered, "how "you interest me for her! will you indulge me "with another sight of her picture?"—"Willingly, "my Lord, on condition that you ask me no ques-"tions about her." I told him I would not attempt to force his confidence, but wait till time should prove me worthy of it. The ring of the setting was so fixed as to enable him to disengage the picture without taking off the ribbon: he put it into my hand, and I again admired a face which it was impossible to look at without admiration. The head was simple and unadorned; it had not even a bandeau of any kind, but the hair fell round the face in natural ringlets: the eyes were animated, but the

smile that was on her lips was divine; the bosom and shoulders were modestly veiled in a fancy muslin robe, and the whole of the figure was bewitching. After saying how captivating I thought it, I added, I had seen a lady whom it resembled. "Perhaps "so, my Lord," he said; "though I believe you "are unacquainted with her who sat for this; but I "have been told it bears a considerable likeness to "the lady of General Tankerville; you may have "seen her." I told him I had not, but still I retained in my imagination traces of a face like the one before me. He assured me that he had the strongest conviction of my never having seen the person for whom the picture was done, whose story was a melancholy one, but which it was impossible for him to talk of. He then put up the picture as before, and silence again ensued. For something to say, I observed that the lady whom he had mentioned was much older than the portrait, and had no pretensions to a resemblance of the virtues he had extolled. "I understood, my Lord," he said, "that you were unacquainted with Mrs. Tanker-"ville." I answered; "I am never in the world "as you see, nor have I mixed with it for many "years. I once saw a Captain Tankerville, who I "believe is the present General, but to his wife I "am a perfect stranger; I don't even know who "she was, but my nephew sometimes talks of her "levity." As I said this Stanley stared at me, I thought with anger. "Does Lord Chopstone know "her then?" he said. "I believe not," I replied; "for the General is so jealous of her that he has "confined her for years at a distant seat, and is "himself so morose, that his former companions "have dropped him." The anger I had perceived now broke forth: Stanley bit his lips, and said warmly—"Lord Powic, I despise a puppy that re-

" ports a report." Although my respect for Lord Chopstone is far from being what I wish it could be, I own I was a little nettled that Stanley, speaking to me, should use so offensive an expression in alluding to my nephew. I therefore put him in mind that he spoke of my nearest relation.—" And is your " nearest relation, my Lord ———" said he—I stopped him, for I saw an accountable rage in his countenance, which I dreaded would prompt some language that it would not have become me to submit to—" Stay, Sir," I said, " reflect before you " speak."—I got up, but he, instead of rising, placed his elbow on the table and supported his head with his hand, which covered his eyes. " Stan- " ley," I said, " I shall return to coffee; let us take " it together with good humour." He made no answer, and I left the room. When I went back, he was calm but grave. After our coffee he told me he was conscious that he had given me reason to be displeased, by suffering a general impulse of indignation to betray him into a rude expression; he said he could not recover himself till he had been alone for a day or two, and that he should therefore go to the farm for a few days. This I at first opposed; but as he persisted, not only with politeness but affectionately, I ordered the carriage, into which his trunk was placed, and we parted very good friends. My last words to him were, if I did not see him in three days, I should dispatch a special messenger for him. I did on the fourth send to enquire what was become of him; and guess my surprise, dear Sir, on hearing that he had left the country and ordered his things to be sent after him.

You who are so well acquainted with the nature of the heart, will easily forgive the weakness of mine; I confess to you that his departure was a pang to it, and that his absence preys upon it. I hoped Provi-

dence had thrown this youth in my way in mercy to an expiation of twenty years. I would sacrifice half my fortune to detain him with me, nor can I account for the abruptness of his leaving the neighbourhood; for how can what passed as to Mrs. Tankerville affect him? and in respect to his harsh term of Chopstone, he knows I was not seriously offended with it: he knows that his opinion and mine are not very wide. I beseech you, dear Mr. Towers, to give me some account of this singular creature, and pardon the loquacity of a fond old man, who is, with the highest esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

POWIC.

A postscript written on the envelope of the preceding letter to Lord Digby by Mr. Towers.

P. S. On a reperusal of Lord Powic's letter, which I beg you will take care of for me, I am persuaded that there is something more in the connexion of this young man with the Tankervilles than has come to our knowledge, but I am too well acquainted with his principles to have any suspicion of his honour. The reports, however, respecting Mrs. Tankerville are not new, either to you or me, and it is well known that her seclusion from the world has been owing to her husband's jealousy. I forget who she was. After Christmas the Percivals will go to town, and either Edward or I will explore Tankerville's solitude in Derbyshire, for the purpose of settling our doubts. Poor Lord Powic! I hope his expiation has been accepted at the throne of grace. Adieu!

PHILIP TOWERS.

LETTER LXII.

MADAME DE ST. VALERI TO PERCIVAL.

An old acquaintance with a new name.

Paris.

FORGIVE me, my dear friend, for having suffered you to remain so long a stranger to my fate. Want of confidence in myself, not in you, has occasioned my silence. In vain I wished to take refuge in your friendship, I felt myself undeserving. I will explain my conduct and my proceedings to you when you have enabled me to ascertain that you still think of me with kindness, and that my letters will not be treated with disdain; for indeed you have just cause to suspect the strength and sincerity of my attachment to you. My conduct has been unaccountable and unjustifiable, yet I hope every thing from your goodness. If you still have any affection for me, be assured that you are to me dearer than ever; if on the contrary I am sunk in your esteem, the brightest ray of my life is darkened and struck from my existence. In the present state of this country it is very doubtful whether this letter will meet you; if you do receive it, in pity answer it immediately: I will then write you a long account of myself, meanwhile know, if you know it not already, that I am MARRIED, that I am no longer Emma Coverley, but St. Valeri's wife, yet ever

Unalterably your friend,

EMMA DE ST. VALERI.

P. S. I have greater hopes than I had of this letter finding its way to you, as Lord Digby has procured it a conveyance by a private hand. Direct to me; *à Madame, Madame de St. Valeri, à son Hotel, sur les Boulevards à Paris.*

LETTER LXIII.

LORD DIGBY TO PHILIP TOWERS.

A promise to supply the loss of intercepted letters—The imprudence of St. Valeri.

Dear Towers,

I DEPLORE the loss of my letters, as my time is fully occupied here, and I can hardly hope to give you so detailed an account of events as I wrote at the periods of their occurring; but as it is impossible to recover them, and as I know I have excited an interest in you respecting the Brighton Beauty, I will endeavour to recall my enthusiasm, and tax Morpheus. At present, however, I can do little more than make the promise, as I have but just heard of Monsieur de Rochefort's intended departure for England in the course of the day, but you may expect to hear fully from me by the first safe opportunity that presents itself. Meanwhile know, though I need not tell you, that Miss Coverley is Madame de St. Valeri.

Her husband has a good hotel here, pleasantly situated on the grands Boulevards, but he does not himself improve on acquaintance: he has a showy countenance and person, which attract at first, but at last one discovers that he is not much indebted to nature for brains, and that he talks by rote. Considering the situation of this unhappy country, for I now see it is a devoted one, he speaks on politics with the greatest imprudence. I have plainly told him that I think it dangerous. The King is shortly to be tried, and he and the royal family are in prison, and their adherents are sufficiently unsafe without wantonly courting destruction. I shall per-

suade St. Valeri to return to England with his wife, or to send her at least before the confusion I foresee. The letters I wrote to you contained an account of the events that have been taking place here, which I shall not repeat; you will hear the facts, and we will discuss them when we meet. I have received all your packets; a thousand and a thousand thanks for their interesting contents, which is all the acknowledgment I can at present make. Adieu!

LETTER LXIV.

LORD DIGBY TO PHILIP TOWERS.

A prudent guardian—Lady Duberley—The purity of the Coverleys—That of the celebrated Sir Roger de Coverley cited—A marriage—A trip to the Continent—A halt at Vaucluse—Petrarch, bubbling water, rocks, and Laura—The newly married lady's thoughts of Edward Percival—Education not to be contrasted with nature—Corilla—Paris—Mrs. Stormont.

Dear Towers,

AFTER the sketch I gave you of Emma Coverley at Brighton, you could not be much surprised at her marriage with St. Valeri. Determined to have him she was, and as I thought there was less risk of destruction in humouring the reins of authority than in provoking her to snap them short, which she would easily have done, I went to town and made it my business to see my friend Sir William Oldham.

Oldham is a reasonable man, and was not much astonished at the resolution of his ward: he is, however, cautious, and took a little time to consider what was best to be done. He was not unacquainted

with the disposition and spirit of the girl whom his old friend Craven Coverley had bequeathed to him, and he had no doubt of the issue that would attend his opposing her wishes. He came to me the morning after I called upon him, and said that he found himself in a very awkward predicament; that he was very well satisfied with the reasoning that occurred to him for consenting to Miss Coverley's marrying; but he was very sure that neither the world in general nor the Chancellor would admit it. And what was to be done with Lady Duberley? she would never listen to it; and would make a fine noise on the business. I acknowledged the difficulty of his situation, and that he stood between two evils; the only thing was to ascertain which was the less, and choose it. Her going off should be prevented if possible; St. Valeri was an alien; how was her property settled? Most of it in strict settlement: that which was not would be in danger: her husband would be punished by the Court of Chancery, but would always be considered as her husband: much trouble would ensue. "If it were "possible," said Oldham, "to reconcile Lady Du- "berley, I think the marriage might take place "quietly, and pass unnoticed till she were of age: "but Lady Duberley—she lives with Lady Duber- "ley—odd's my life, a thought strikes me," continued he: "with the highest rage for parade and "fashion, the old woman is the greatest prude ex- "isting: would it be too indelicate to your friend "to alarm her aunt on the score of character? no "body need know it but ourselves; my life for it, "she would be for patching up a wedding instantly, "and I should have her soliciting, instead of oppos- "ing, my consent." I knew Miss Coverley's opinions too well to fear she would be very much hurt at this artifice, and I agreed to Sir William's

attempting this mode of bringing her Ladyship over.

In the course of the day I saw Miss Coverley, and told her that her guardian proposed to consult Lady Duberley. "He may just as well go and "consult the tigress in the Tower," said she; "the "old cat would screw up her mouth thus"—And she lisped her aunt off to the life—"Gad so! Craven "Coverley's daughter marry a French hop-o-my "thumb! My niece, whom British peers are sighing "for, sink into a *Madame!* If he had been one of "the Princes indeed! but a Chevalier! which every "body knows is nobody. If I thought the girl was "low-minded enough to think of such a match, I "should, Sir William Oldham, insist upon your "using the rigour of your authority, given to you "by law, according to the will of my dear brother, "and send the girl where she should never again "see the face of a Frenchman, or that of a com-"moner of any country. Ask her, do ask her, if I "married a commoner? By the by, my Lord," continued she, resuming her own melodious tones, "did you ever see the noble peer to whom she gave "her hand and fortune? though I beg your pardon "for the question, as I have heard he was dropping "into the grave with age at the time of the marri-"age, and in less than nine months after left her a "widow; a widow indeed! she has all the starch-"ness and prudery of an old maid; and perhaps no "wonder."

Having joined her in the laugh at her aunt's expence, I seized the word prudery to hint Sir William's thought. She conceived it before I had well uttered an obscure allusion to it, and said, after another loud laugh, that it was a happy one. "Alarm her, I beseech you, for the family honour, "and spare no term of rashness that will complete

" her conviction of the danger it is in."—Again the mad-cap laughed. I wish, Towers, I had never known her, for I saw at that moment, and alas! I see still, that the pleasure of her friendship must be followed by the sorrow of seeing her lost. I have dared to curb her, and she listens to my advice with the affection of a daughter: but she is soon off again into ridicule, which she levels against the restraints of what she calls unnatural customs. What a shame is it that such beauty and talents were early suffered to take a wrong bias! what a pity that this girl should be even now destitute of that guidance which only an amiable, sensible, and experienced woman can bestow! Had she a mother, or any other female relation, who would be at the pains of gaining her confidence and watching over her, I should hope to see her yet shine honourably in the brilliant circles of our country, and pass her youth respected and beloved. As for St. Valeri's relations:—but I am anticipating, and will only add to my digression, that I am anxious to save her, and that I will make the best use I can of the esteem and affection she expresses for me, to prevent her proving a star " that falls to rise no more."

Sir William having undertaken to make an attack on Lady Duberley in the weak quarter, called upon her Ladyship in a few days, and gravely opened the business to her; saying that he had been advised by a prudent and sagacious friend not to oppose a marriage, but to use expedition in concluding it, for reasons of the utmost importance to the young lady's reputation: adding, " But, Madam, " what am I to do? the world will consider me as " guardian of her person and fortune, not of her " fame." Her Ladyship gave vent to a hurricane of rage, and after exhausting her stock of epithets on beggars, low people, and abject young women who

could throw themselves away to gratify their beastly passions and whims, she told Oldham that a taint on the name of Coverley would be death to her, that the purity of the family had been proverbial for ages, and that the delicacy and chastity of her grand-uncle, the celebrated Sir Roger, had been the theme of one of the finest writers of this country. She then showed him a friendly anonymous letter that she had just received herself, which made her tremble for the blood of the Coverleys. Comparing this letter with the advice given to him, she thought it was written by some sensible and kind friend who did not wish to take an ostensible part in the information, and she concluded by assuring him that she thought the first and most essential duty of a guardian to a female ward was to preserve her reputation unsullied, by every means in his power. I suspected Miss Coverley to be herself the author of the friendly epistle, which she did not deny. Oldham suffered himself to be gradually led by her aunt to make up the match, on condition of the married couple living in a private manner till the Lady was of age, and thus without any eclat was effected what, when I first thought of Lady Duberley, I believed would be attended with much difficulty and noise.

Sir William convinced Mr. Saunderson that it was the best conduct they could pursue as trustees, to take care of the property; and the settlements being completed and adjusted to their approbation, a licence was procured, the ceremony was privately performed, and Oldham himself gave Emma away. Lady Duberley did not conceal her disapprobation to either bride or bridegroom, but vouchsafed to be present in consideration of future reflections. Sir William behaved nobly in seeing them provided with a considerable sum immediately, assuring them

that supplies should be punctually made, and the estates properly attended to and delivered into their possession on Madame de St. Valeri's coming of age. Meanwhile it was thought by all who were privy to the marriage that a trip to the continent would be the best mode of passing the time; and as St. Valeri wished to present his bride to his sisters who were still in Paris, she, who was fond of French manners, agreed to the plan with rapture. On being warmly pressed by both of them to pass the autumn in their company, and having also a desire of being a spectator of some of the scenes performing on the grand Gallic theatre, I readily consented, and we set out from London the week after the marriage without their making any public appearance.

Before we were half way to Paris, Madame de St. Valeri, in whom volatility is characteristic, proposed that we should for the present only stay a day or two at Paris, just that she might make a curtesy to Madame de Rallon and Rose de St. Valeri her new sisters, and then take a flight to the shores of Italy, the descriptions of which had excited her enthusiasm. I made no objection, and she executed her scheme notwithstanding a little opposition at first from St. Valeri, who wished to make some previous arrangements. "Oh!" cried she, "let us enjoy this "delightful autumn, you will have time enough by "and by for arrangements." Alas! dear Towers, it has proved a sad and gloomy autumn to France; but when we arrived at Paris, though the spirits of its inhabitants were in a storm, their sky was clear; and the little Rose de St. Valeri, being invited, and being also as anxious to fly about the world as her sister-in-law, urged us to take wing for that enchanting country, which not to have seen was a blot upon the taste of all who could afford it. In short we were literally but three days in Paris.

Having secured proper passports and letters, that as little interruption as possible might be given to our journey, we set off in good spirits in a carriage hired for the purpose, and adapted to the roads, which I found much worse than when we travelled them together, Philip, and in some places dangerous.

I do not mean to keep you long on this tour with us; with every part of the scenery of it you are acquainted, and it was attended with few incidents worthy recital. Indeed I do not think I should have brought you into our journey at all, but for two points that require the mention of place in the narrative. Having got safe in our carriage to Lyons, we stopped a couple of days, merely to gratify our eyes; for, carry this with you, our rapid movements were intended for little more than visual indulgence: though indeed at Florence both Madame de St. Valeri and Rose, there *Signora Rosa*, which appellation she has since retained, were extremely assiduous in perfecting themselves in the language, in observing the manners, and in gaining a knowledge of the country, as well as in viewing the grand gallery and other museums that have immortalized the taste and spirit of the Medici. But I must go far back from Florence, to relate the first point that tempted me to make you of the party.

At the desire of Madame de St. Valeri we went down the Rhone. I need not tell you that the sisters were astonished and delighted at the sublime appearance of the Pont St. Esprit. I felt the same veneration for it myself that I did twenty years ago, although not the same surprise. Of course we rested at Avignon to visit Vaucluse.—"What a place!" cried the sprightly Emma. "I am quite disappointed: rocks and a little bubbling water! I expected "that the air would electrify me with love: I never "had any great opinion of the force of Platonism,

" and now I am convinced that it is all stuff, and " only fit to make sonnets of. Had we clambered " to the barren rock in the Pays de Vaud, where " indeed love, real love, enflamed the heart, and fed " the ardent imagination of a St. Preux, each step " we took we should have felt the animating fire " pervading every nerve; we should have shared " the rapturous emotions of the lover of Eloise: " but here—mais ici—ton cœur ne bat plus vite, " St. Valeri? Voyons; que je le touche—ah!—plus " tranquille encore que le mien!—Le malheureux " Pétrarque!" St. Valeri, whose intellect and deficiency of common information are already become the jest of his wife, and who did not very well comprehend that she could be seriously laughing at a love that had for ages so delighted and astonished the world, began a piteous speech, as I presume most visitors of the fountain do, in compassion to the memory of the tender and unfortunate frequenter of it. " Laisse là ta pitié, mon ami," said his wife, " il ne la meritoit pas."—" Cela est vrais," replied he, " car il faut avouer qu'il avoit le tort " d'aimer la femme d'un autre."—" Es tu sot, St. " Valeri?" said she, " Le tort! eh! ce n'est pas " cela: c'est qu'il aimoit la pauvre Laure comme il " aimoit ces rochers, pour faire des vers; elle n'etoit " que sa muse. Crois-tu, s'il avoit été vraiment " amoureux, non comme il se peint dans ses vieux " sonnets, mais amoureux comme etoit le sensible " St. Preux, qu'il auroit passé dès années sans tenter " une seule imprudence? Non, non, Petrarque " savoit très-bien qu'on devient, quoiqu'en disent " les maris, amoureux de la femme d'un autre; " c'est tout simple; mais il se connoissoit mal en " amour, il n'en parloit que pour rimer, et il ne " mérite pas d'être plaint pour n'avoir eu que ce " succès: il ne visoit qu'à cela."

As this sally, which you are by no means to understand as the offspring of mere sprightliness, but the candid production of a lively imagination and ardent feelings, will discover to you more of the character of St. Valeri's wife than any laboured attempt to draw it, I have brought you to Vaucluse to hear it. She talks of love as if she felt it. Avowedly and apparently her husband is not the object of it: she *fancied* the man, as she says. If I could pitch upon any one as having touched her heart as well as her fancy, it would be PERCIVAL; yes, your Percival, of whom she talks with extreme enthusiasm. "He has," says she, "a bewitching form and coun-"tenance, that would infallibly make every woman "fall in love with him, if it were not for the unna-"tural and pedantic sentiments he professes; and "yet," continues she, "when they come from his "lips, they sound so unaffectedly moral, that one "forgets nature to be virtuous too."—"Too fast, "too fast, my fair friend," said I; "are virtue and "nature opposites?"—"Did I say so?" cried she "laughing; "no, no, I must not say so. In Per-"cival I am sure they are not: they seem so united, "that if they do not absolutely spring from the "same root, the one has been very early engrafted "on the other. But then engrafting, your Lordship "will allow, is using art with nature." She often hits off a thought in this manner and then flies from it, so that it is difficult to make her attend to a serious answer, though I am sometimes so *pedantic*, as I tell her, as to return and attack her metaphors days after she has supposed them victorious. You may be sure I did not leave her to imagine that I was satisfied with a distinction being left between the dictates of nature and the effects of education. I convinced her that education was itself in fact a dictate of nature, and that its best use was the

formation of good habits. She contended, however, that habit had nothing to do with love; that, although the intellect might be taught to moralize, the heart was above control. I instanced Percival, knowing it would have weight with her. "Even "Percival," said she, "is no exception: he does "not control his heart; it is fascinated by his wife's "beautiful eyes and pouting under lip. If some "lucky chance should but poke out those, or tear "off that, and leave teeth and gums to produce an "amorous atrophy, like poor Miss Vandercom, "whose paucity of the feature, as a celebrated "author would say, obliges her to exert the labial "muscles in order to pustle a covering round from "every side, which, after all, requires the assistance "of the tip of her tongue to fill the remaining "aperture, my life for it his best morals would "not confine his heart to Julia. But," continued she, "I will allow one surprising thing, which is, "that he is not either cloyed with a wife to whom "he has been married I believe more than three "years, or moved by the charms of novelty."— These are libertine ideas, my dear Towers, and I fear proceed from a libertine heart. I am sorry for it, and I will counteract them if I can.

Now let me carry you by the Mediterranean to Florence, and introduce you to the wonderful *Corilla*. There are many *Improvisatores* in Italy, but she is acknowledged by the Italians to be the most remarkable. We paid her a visit in company with Mr. Bonin of Geneva, his lady and daughter. Bonin, who teaches natural philosophy, was to explain a phenomenon, and she, without any previous notice of the subject, to *improvise* upon it. The subject he chose was *Thunder*, one very well suited to poetry, and capable of being put in a proper light for that purpose. He pitched, however, on the

more obscure parts, and explained them in a very bungling manner. From this circumstance, and his speaking Italian very ill, the *Corilla* had much difficulty to understand him. As soon, however, as she made out his meaning, she called a musician and made him play an air to her liking; following that, she sung most pleasingly, and with suitable action, some hundred verses, in which she not only versified the account she had heard, but introduced many poetical images, interspersed with compliments on the philosopher's acuteness, and excuses for her want of ability to please him and his amiable lady. All this she sung in a short rhiming metre. She then ordered another air to be played in a different style, and sung again on the same subject, not only in a different measure, which the Italians call *ottava rima*, something like Spenser's verses, but with different thoughts and expressions. After this, M. Bonin's daughter, an amiable infant, repeated a French fable, in which the nightingale and sparrow court the same female, each relating his qualifications, the nightingale promising to entertain her with music, and the sparrow to caress her. *Corilla* was delighted with the fable, and the child's manner of telling it, and ordered a third air to be played in which she sung the same story in elegant Italian verses, and ended with compliments and excuses to the company, and many pretty things addressed to the child. During these extempore songs her countenance and gestures, so suited to her conceits, were most animating, and not only make me believe what Horace says of his Improvisatores to be literally true, but enliven my faith in the stories of the old bards and prophets. How the verses would appear on paper, it is hard to say. They are in general spoken so fast that they cannot be taken

down in writing, and she cannot repeat them except when the fit is on her, which is rarely but in company. If Amphion and Orpheus had left their verses behind, they would probably have lost much of the effect they had when accompanied by action and song. Had I lived in the days of Sappho and seen her at Lesbos, I scarcely think I should have been so well pleased. Sappho was ugly, but *Corilla*, though now growing old, and therefore seeing people chiefly by candle-light, has the remains of a fine face and neck, and the marks of so much feeling, and, what is still more uncommon here, good nature in her countenance, as would entitle her to make conquests without her abilities. The surprize and admiration of Madame de St. Valeri and Rosa surpassed all they had expressed at the sight of the Pont St. Esprit, and they have talked of nothing so much since our return as of *Corilla*.

Madame de St. Valeri wished to remain longer at Florence, and it was not till her husband, who had serious affairs in Paris, spoke peremptorily, that she yielded. "A pretty slavery indeed!" cried she. It was, thank Heaven! during our absence that the horrid events which took place in the prisons of this capital happened: I turn from the thought with horror. This city is still in a convulsed state. Every Frenchman attached to royalty generally, or to the King personally, is in imminent danger of his life. I think St. Valeri by no means safe: he is watched, I am confident. To the English a superabundant civility is shown, and, I am sorry to say, there are numbers who appear to deserve such civility. But I have written you a long letter, and fear to broach political topics; I will only say that the Convention are determined to try the King, and I believe to murder him in form. Since the retreat

of the Duke of Brunswick they think themselves safe, and there is no enormity to which their rashness will not lead.

Among the English here, how will you be shocked to be told that Mrs, Stormont is conspicuous in her folly. She is at present living with a man of the name of Rumbold. She has acquired an impenetrable shield of brass, and is become as noisy and vulgar as she was always silly. She is in the direct and steep descent of infamy. Her friend is an overgrown, coarse fellow, with a good purse, who has gained acquaintances by dint of attending race-grounds and gaming-tables. This pair are received at some of the chief democratic houses, and the lady has the assurance to give herself airs, because Lord Digby thinks proper to decline visiting her. In the most delicate manner I could, I made Madame de St. Valeri observe the disgrace and horror of the wretched woman's situation. Her answer was: "Disgraceful and horrid indeed! How dif-"ferent from the life of a Ninon!" By the by, Madame de St. Valeri I find is in correspondence with Percival: let Julia look to it.

I have perused your letters with the greatest pleasure, and at times with great pain; I mean, as to the latter, where they treat of Charles Percival, for whom I have felt much kind prepossession: but so it is, that cursed itch for gambling never fails to ruin the mind it invades, let its original structure have been ever so noble. Your last, informing me that he had disappeared, and that nobody could tell what had become of him, gave me an idea that he might be here, but I have enquired in vain. Your accounts of Stanley and Triton, of Giles and Dame Aikin, Lord Powic, old William, and the black chamber, have interested me beyond expression. As for Stanley, my comprehension is not equal to his his-

tory, as you give it. No man who had been merely a footman could correspond with your description. You know my bias, Philip, to prefer talents and virtue, individually, to rank and fortune, and therefore will not charge me with a harsh and inconsiderate censure. No condition precludes a man from acting a worthy and honourable part; but be assured that that elevation of spirit which appears in Stanley, that dignified modesty, that amiable presumption in Lord Powic's presence against the reporter of slander, are no marks of a fashionable domestic. Had he been accustomed to service and acquiescence, and at the same time seized with a desire of pushing himself forward, a tale of slander was not a fit motive to produce a passionate reprobation of the Earl's nephew. Every thing you have said to me of this young man himself is a strong indication of some mistake relative to his condition; and yet I own the external circumstances are very strong, and in some degree excuse the certainty you have all admitted of his having been the footman of Brainless. His resemblance to Lord Coteridge is extraordinary, but not without example. I hope you will find him again before I return to England, I long to see him, and will do my utmost to serve him, if he should want it; though, indeed, it is clear he cannot want a friend while Lord Powic lives. I remember Lord Coteridge a fine, handsome, sensible, lively fellow. I had very little the start of him in life, but he disappeared all of a sudden, and I afterwards heard that he fell in America. I return you Lord Powic's letter: poor old man! I pity him. Why will not men look forward into their lives beyond the present moment, and prevent those miseries which, could they be seen, would surely not be chosen! Adieu!

LETTER LXV.

PERCIVAL TO MADAME DE ST. VALERI.

Some ground for congratulation—Place endeared to us by youth and by love.

I REJOICE to find you again, my friend, for to that title the short letter I have just received from you confirms my right. How can you for a moment doubt the continuation of my kindness? Talk no more I beseech you of ascertaining it, but let it be at once ascertained for ever. My attachment to you is that of the purest friendship, and will continue through life. Your attention delights me, and I will not suppose you to have committed an error, when your conduct may be productive of happiness. The sudden interruption of your correspondence, and the length of your silence, made me anxious about you, but you were by no means so unaccountable as to prevent my foreseeing your plan.

Though unacquainted with M. de St. Valeri, I hope I may congratulate you. May your promised communication be such as to give the prospect of a lasting happiness, and my heart and pen shall overflow with congratulation. Your marriage was conducted with such privacy, that it has not been talked of at all; but I have heard, through the means of a confidential friend, that it was known to your guardians; this is a happy circumstance, on which I may congratulate you. May it establish in your mind those principles of prudence which will secure you respect and esteem as well as love. Oh! let me say again that matrimony affords the most fertile soil of felicity. Cultivate it, I beseech you, that I may have the joy of seeing my friend blest.

One thing makes me uneasy for you; the complexion of the times in Monsieur de St. Valeri's country; the state of France. The increased emigration proves to me the insecurity of any person attached to the royal cause. I wish both you and your husband were in England: do not think any property abroad worth the risk of staying; your estates are ample funds for every thing you can desire: persuade M. de St. Valeri of this, and not to loiter too long on quick-sands. I own the King's situation must be interesting, horribly interesting, but it is an interest that pervades every quarter of The globe, and I believe few bosoms in Paris have more lively feelings on the subject than it excites in those of England.

We are at present at Bevil-lodge, the little paradise where first I saw my Julia. I always look at these scenes with renewed and increased delight. The banks of the Avon, the lawn, the octagon temple where I first told her that I loved her, and which we have ever since called the Temple of Love, are magnetic attractions to my imagination; and I am gratified beyond measure in carrying my little boy and girl over these favourite spots, so dear to the remembrance of their father. Oh! waste not your precious hours, my friends; hasten from confusion to the tranquil shades of happy England, and fix at once on an abode, that you may consecrate a local habitation to early love, which your memory may hereafter gild with charms beyond the power of the most enchanting place to bestow. Lovers know not what they are to lose when the scenes of their early effusions are at a distance which they cannot revisit frequently. At Bevil-lodge I always experience the union of the pleasures of imagination with those of the reality of the surrounding objects. Where would these delights have been had we been shut up

in an hotel at Paris, or a house in London, when we exchanged our hearts? I do not say we should have loved less, or that our emotions at the time would not have been equally grateful to us; I talk of after-time, and a different emotion; of a feather from the wings of Love, not of Love himself. As I think I cannot urge a more alluring motive for your return, for I am sure France will afford no such scenes at present, I will only add my hope of soon receiving your promised account, and an assurance that I am as much interested in the welfare of Madame de St. Valeri as I was in that of Miss Coverley.

LETTER LXVI.

MADAME DE ST. VALERI TO PERCIVAL.

A hasty marriage—Corilla—Conflicts of the heart—Dependence—A castle in the air overturned—St. Valeri's family—Paris—Repining.

How infinitely has my mind been gratified by the new assurances of affection from the pen of Percival! Most truly do I thank him for his kind sympathy in my fate. Can I be otherwise than delighted when I possess the esteem of such a heart as his! It will ever be a source of joy to me in the bright portions of my existence, and of consolation in the cloudy hours I foresee. My dear friend, I have a long story to tell you of a fermenting mind; but I must content myself at first with giving you an account of my marriage-flight.

You say you foresaw my plan. Were I disposed to be enigmatical, I would say you would not have done so had you seen into my mind; for you would per-

haps have discovered there what would have made almost any other romantic girl resolve not to marry as I did. There was a kind of inexplicable battle-royal at my heart, fought by liberty, love, fancy, and Percival's advice.

I was at the same time pestered by a knot of personages whom I either hated or despised, when Fancy, shielding herself with your sentiments, gained an advantage to which I yielded, and throwing myself upon the amiable and philosophic Lord Digby for friendly assistance, I managed, without much difficulty, to become, what you exalt so high, a wife. To describe to you the malignant rage, screwed up features, and lisping accents of my most amiable aunt, would be loss of time, and not altogether to your taste, which has so often warned me against mimickry and ridicule: but you will perhaps be surprized at the ease with which Sir William Oldham consented to the marriage. All I can tell you is, that on a consultation, first with Lord Digby and then with my aunt, they had both the pardonable assurance to think it was the best thing I could do. It was, however, thought proper that my affairs, which are all settled to the liking of Sir William, should remain as they were till I come of age, to which St. Valeri, who in the main is a good-natured fellow, agreed.

Lord Digby, whom the more I know the more I respect and love, was prevailed upon to make an excursion with us to the continent. We flew on the wings, I will not say of love, but of pleasure, entirely across France, and pitched for about six weeks in Florence. At Paris we did little more than bait, just to take up St. Valeri's younger sister Rosa, and to make my curtesy to the elder sister Madame de Rallon. I was delighted with every thing I saw, every thing I heard, every thing I did. I saw no-

thing, however, of all that tourists see and publish, that I so much admire as the Florentine Corilla; an elegant and sensible woman, who in the most graceful and expressive manner composes extempore verses on any subject, and sings them divinely. I wrote among my minutes an account of an evening we passed in company with this extraordinary being, which I will one day shew you, and I shall only at present observe of her, that she has been a very handsome woman, and still retains a great portion of beauty, that her abilities are very superior, that she has a husband, but has long given up *the form of seeing him*, that she has never scrupled to please her fancy with lovers, and that after spending a very delightful life, she talks as soberly on moral and religious points as any married woman, though still the object of love, and living with a Marquis of her own country.

I should have liked much to pass the winter at Florence; for though formerly I was fond of the *gaieté de cœur* of the French while I was a girl among them, in Italy I found every thing novel and beautiful: in short, I was captivated, and before I would quit it had two quarrels with St. Valeri, one in private, very serious; and another before Lord Digby, with some attention to good manners. I saw that I was born for continual mortifications, and that an even flow of happiness was never to be my lot. But let me not so soon wound you with my complaints: I will imbibe your lessons, Percival. You are ever in my thoughts, I read your letters again and again; they have been productive of more pleasing sensations than I can describe, and I cannot say how exquisitely happy it makes me to reflect that I have a place in the affection of a soul like yours. Still, still I feel the horror of dependence. Were St. Valeri an angel, did he possess every quality

which can endear one person to another, the idea of my depending in any degree upon him would make me miserable. If possible let your friendly pen lull my faculties to submission, though I freely confess to you I have little hope even in the influence of that. The delirium of Fancy is now almost cooled: she has lost her magic, and old Reason begins to open his eyes. Instead of riding on the wings of zephyrs, listening to the chaunts of angels, and drinking the nectar of gods, we must return to our original cold existence, view with disappointed eyes our mortality, and acknowledge in humility our weakness, misery, and *dependence*. Conceive my sensations when I reflect that by a *single* act I have forfeited all the flattering hopes which once in imagination made the joy of my life. My freedom is gone, and what can compensate for the loss of it? not all the riches of the earth. Percival, I had imaged a plan to concentrate all the springs of happiness. I had raised an enchanted castle in which it was my intention to have collected whatever could gratify the mind or charm the senses. Science and pleasure, learning and gaiety, the lectures of philosophy and the sounds of music, were to conspire to my bliss: and the rational and the frivolous were to be admitted to entertain the intellect and amuse the fancy. I should have realized one of the most perfect systems of human felicity that ever warmed the mind of man or woman. Three months ago this blessed prospect lay before me—alas! how changed to the most mortifying picture! I see myself a slave, and nothing awaits me but misery or death. Is it not a curse, my friend, to be born with such strong feelings? Sometimes, I must own, they are productive of superior delight, but too often they are the source of intolerable pangs.

St. Valeri is esteemed, at least, a good-natured

creature. So he is in general, but our discordant spirits have already clashed: he has even checked my sentiments since our return to Paris, and appeals to his sisters against the boldness of my opinions. These he knew before; I kept no secret from him: but thus it is, the laws have given him the right of a husband. Madame de Rallon and Rosa de St. Valeri are indeed more reasonable than their brother, and have a pleasure in hearing my notions, when we are by ourselves: not so *Monsieur le mari* of Madame de Rallon, whom I every now and then catch peeping askew at me, and one day he told me, half laughing half serious, that I was little more than one of the fashionable *democrates* who were operating a revolution in matrimony. I see the French women are far more tolerable than the men. Madame de Rallon, than whom I believe there is not a more strictly virtuous woman even among the prudes of England, is full of life, and is no enemy to building castles on a Spanish foundation, that is, in the air; but she has certain limited notions, which are not to be eradicated when they have been early sown in the mind.

Monsieur de Rallon has for some time past been very prudently remitting funds to England in a private manner. St. Valeri very imprudently talks of his intentions to do so himself, and forgets, not only that he may be overheard by some who are not his friends, but that he has no funds to remit. If he could sell his estate at Ostroville, which lies in the neighbourhood of Provins in Champagne, at no great distance from Paris, for a fair value, he might save from the wreck of his fortune about five thousand pounds sterling; but a sale at present is out of the question. He rather wishes in his heart that he could think of clearing off the incumbrances; and so do I: but Lord Digby says, and indeed his own

relations say, it would be madness at present, to which he involuntarily assents, and then it is he talks of taking up more money upon it to remit. It is a very pretty place; nor do I wonder at his wishing to save it; and if France were what it was when I formerly delighted in it, Ostroville should be in no danger of passing from the St. Valeris; but sad and deep is the change: Paris is not the same place, nor can the vivacity of my little Rosa, or the indulgent manners of St. Valeri's elder sister, remove the gloom and stupidity of the scene, not to say the horror, as you observe, attendant on the interest inspired by the situation of the royal family.

Although I appear with forced spirits, I am often melancholy, and wish myself again in England, since I am *not allowed* to be at Florence. Not allowed! oh! Percival, I am unhappy to a degree that I cannot express. When the thought crosses me, and it crosses me too often, life is a burden to me. Your letters upon the female character made me resolve on marriage: my dear friend, advise me now; I want advice; tell me to break my fetters, and seek happiness after my own ideas; or will you say that I must calmly submit to glide away my portion of existence in apathy or disgust? If so, instruct me, as I have already besought you in this letter, how I am to do it. You have, I will own it, a powerful assistant in Lord Digby, who condescends to amuse my fantasies, as they are called, while he reasons in favour of the prejudices of the world; but all he says, and all you have said on the same points vanish when I feel myself, in spite of those rational principles, substantially wretched. Why am I formed differently from the rest of my species? why do I not see as they do, think as they do, feel as they do? then should I act as they do.

Percival, is the conclusion of your letter in nature?

It is the style of a lover, not of a husband who has been married for years. Oh happy infatuation! but there is no infatuation for me. I have no Avon banks, no lawn, no octagon-temple of love, to sooth my imagination. I have no feather from the wing of Love, for Love himself disdained to smile upon my nuptials.—The word is blotted—it was a tear that dropped upon it; I cannot help it, my eyes are full of them. I will go to Madame de Rallon to dry them; I love her dearly, and if I am obliged to submit, I feel she will be a great consolation to me. Write soon.

LETTER LXVII.

PERCIVAL TO MADAME DE ST. VALERI.

Fanciful views of life end in disappointment—Ardour a blessing, but there is happiness without rapture—The genuine medicine of the soul—Some notions respecting the separation of a wife from her husband.

YOUR letter as it relates to our friendship was productive of infinite pleasure to me, but as it relates to your own happiness, it does not, I am grieved to find, call into congratulation that warmth from my heart which you possess there. I do not say this with the smallest intention of derogating from Monsieur de St. Valeri, for being unacquainted with him I can have formed no judgment of my own respecting him, and anxious for your happiness I am the more inclined to see him in a favourable light; but I say it from being more and more confirmed in the judgment I have formed of *your own* character. Alas! you are viewing life through a romantic glass; a prism that throws delightful colours on the objects

we look at, and which flatters the vision with fairy pictures. When the glass is removed, as removed it must be, enthusiasm is disappointed, and we quarrel with Nature for being different from what we wish her.

It is no curse to be born with strong feelings but according to the direction they take. That ardour which buoys the soul in ecstacies on the current of life is the happy lot of very few: so far as I have sailed on the stream it has been mine. In love, in friendship, in the various occurrences of life, it has smoothed the waters about me. It is no delirium, it is consonant to Reason, and goes hand in hand with her: when it fails Reason may open her eyes, but it will be to see her loss. To descend, however, from flights in which the soul is rapt, there is surely a medium between a life of rapture and cold existence which is no trivial source of happiness. Kind attentions mutually kept up will always endear even indifferent persons to each other, and will not the very names of husband and wife lead to those attentions, to those endearments? The flame of love once raised will burn long if fanned by both the votaries, but will inevitably expire if left only to the care of one. Were you justifiable in opposing St. Valeri's return to Paris? I only wonder how he consented to go beyond it at such a crisis, though his consent was fortunate; and it was surely natural that he should be anxious to return. With respect to your opinions, if a friend is uneasy about them, what must a husband be? If, as I fear, your mind and imagination are thirsting for an unattainable felicity, I must recur to my old doctrines: compose a happiness you cannot find; fortify yourself as much as possible against external attacks; generalize your ideas; read, look into the regions of the universe, cast your eyes on this ball of earth as on a speck;

and expand your soul through the creation, then will little disagreeable objects become invisible, and your present torments be unfelt. Look forward for real bliss, and raise a present happiness in the hope of securing it for the future. Be assured you are not singular: the philosophy I preach may be hard to follow, but it is real philosophy, the only sure recourse of the understanding. All other advice is empirical, and may cure or kill by chance; but to seek the will of Heaven, and act as nearly as possible in conformity with it, is the only genuine medicine of the human soul.

I cannot advise you to break your fetters, but I would endeavour to make them sit easier. To break them in order to pursue the alluring visions of your imagination, must be attended with the total loss of all that is most desirable in life, and with a sad disappointment in the ideas you have formed; ideas which, romantic as they are, I do not discourage you from attempting hereafter, in union with St. Valeri; but which, if even with such union they can be realized, never can be accomplished if you begin with contemptuously dashing down the moral structures of society. Although I do not advise you to break your fetters, neither would I have your life pass away in apathy and disgust. Should these indeed take place, should the living with your husband be attended with misery, it is hard for a friend to advise a continuation of it: but if you have the smallest opinion of my understanding, if my sentiments have any weight in guiding you, you will never commence a separation by an abrupt departure from your husband, or with a breach of those rules which the moral system has laid down for your sex. If hereafter a separation should be absolutely necessary for your peace, urge it calmly and with dignity to your husband, and let it take place by

mutual consent; and surely no man would wish to continue living with a woman whom he cannot make happy, and who seriously desires a separation. But I will not conceal from you, and I expect an additional glow of affection for this bold proof of sincerity, that I am fully persuaded if ever it should come to that, you would be totally a lost being. I firmly believe that, far from being happier in such a separation, farther disappointments and universal condemnation would, on the contrary, bring down more affliction upon your head than you can possibly now endure, however intense you may think it. What a dangerous and stormy period of existence are you passing through! Gladly would I show you which way to shape your course and how to manage the helm. The chief business of life is to cultivate and improve our faculties and virtues. Charming and sensible as you are, consider your youth, and whether this culture of your mind and soul is not to be continued: set yourself seriously about it, beginning with fortitude, and you will soon forget apathy and disgust.

It gives me infinite satisfaction to hear that Lord Digby is with you. I know no man on whose assistance in the efforts of reason I would sooner depend; he unites ability and virtue, firmness and pleasantry: give him your ear, my friend, and open your heart to his counsels. I like your account too of Madame de Rallon: as she attends to you, it is but just you should attend to her. I am persuaded she is a charming woman, and her friendship will be of great importance to you. As for the Corilla, had you kept her to the sphere of her attraction, I should have joined you in admiring her. Her talent is wonderful; my friend Towers has read me Lord Digby's account of her: but in her life, at least what you state of it, so far from seeing any thing delight-

ful, it is only wonderful to me how any woman can so sear her mind as to have a peaceful moment while she leads a life of libertinism. The conclusion of your letter was painful; your doubt of my happiness being natural, and the tear that dropped on the word *nuptials*, show that you have mistaken nature, and that the spirit that repines within you is less licentious than you yourself imagine. Come, come, exert your strength of soul, and let me see my friend all I wish her.—Deserve to be happy by commanding the esteem of the virtuous, and I will answer for your yet allowing yourself to be among the happiest of women.

LETTER LXVIII.

MADAME DE ST. VALERI TO PERCIVAL.

Unsettled notions of happiness—Murmurs, and a plan of liberty in embryo—Change in St. Valeri—Disgust—A visionary—Contrast of minds.

Could you, Percival, discard a little of your moral pedantry, you would be the first of men: but that you are as it is; you would, let me say, be more than man, the pride of Nature. But I excuse you, for I know the noble designs you have in view; I am acquainted with the benevolence of your spirit.

You connect the words *medium* and *happiness;* you forget your former description of the husband necessary for me, and you tell me that if I will but deserve to be happy, you will answer for my being among the happiest of women. Alas! happiness will never smile on me. My friend; at this distance let me say, my beloved friend, I affirm that there are pleasures which perhaps but few minds can feel,

pleasures that arise from a mixture of sensibility and virtue with *independence*, for the loss of which not the whole stock of the vulgar enjoyments of life can compensate. Will you not understand me? My soul is bursting with the idea, and is unable to give it appropriate language. Perhaps it is to be found in this passage of an inimitable painter of the feelings:

> The high born soul
> Disdains to rest her heaven-aspiring wing
> Beneath its native quarry—
> Not in the fading echoes of renown,
> Power's ample robes, or Pleasure's flow'ry lap,
> The soul shall find enjoyment.—Nature's cares
> The obedient heart far otherwise incline—
> Witness the sprightly joy when aught unknown
> Strikes the quick sense, and wakes each active power
> To brisker measures—witness the neglect
> Of all familiar prospects though beheld
> With transport once, &c.

No, I cannot make it coherent; the last five lines come nearest. Forgive me, I am half mad: do not be too severe on my understanding, of which I am anxious you should have a good opinion, while at times I give you reason to doubt the solidity of it.

You advise me to read, to study the works of God, to expand my mind. I thank you, Percival; here you are on my side. Although it might be supposed that the usual pleasures of youth would dazzle me, I could make the pursuit of this advice the chief enjoyment of my life; but can a young woman carry her researches very far, unaided by the kind hand of wisdom and experience? Impossible. A great degree of encouragement is necessary, and *I* have *no* help. On the contrary, with the single exception of Lord Digby, I have been constantly ridiculed on all sides for such preposterous notions

even Madame de Rallon laughs at me. Is not this then a real source of misery to me? and the more so, as it is become impossible for me to remove it, without forfeiting that fame which you value so highly, and which your friendship and admonitions have raised in me some desire to preserve. You must feel that the sympathy of two minds nearly allied by similar pursuits is of all others the intercourse most rational as well as most soothing: and now never am I to hope to enjoy it. I have a good house, a fine-toned piano, a painted book-case, delicacies on my table, and wise apes to eat them: I receive the attentions paid to A WIFE, and I have all the comforts, that is, the usual parade of life; yet the grand object is wanting, and I am ungratified. Is this ingratitude for the blessing of abundance? Oh no! Had I a head as clear as yours, I would convince you that what has the appearance of ingratitude, is nothing more than a warm, enthusiastic desire to taste more genuine bliss, and to attain more perfection than is in common the lot of sublunary beings.

I began this letter with an intention of trusting it to the post, but being promised an opportunity by a private hand in the course of the next week, I shall keep it open, and add my thoughts from time to time as they occur.

* * * * * * * * * *

I have been reading your letters again. I know not how it is that they affect my heart in spite of their opposition to my understanding, but I always read them with new delight, and with more pleasure than I receive from any thing else. Your constant advice throughout our correspondence has been resignation, and a curb upon the impulses of imagination. This I have struggled to accomplish because

you advised it, but I confess that at times I feel the struggle is in vain. Repeated wounds will rouse the mind to action. It is now four months since to be virtuous I discontinued to be free. I riveted my fetters that Percival might not cease to esteem me: but I do not, I cannot charge him with the error of my own precipitancy. No, though he is now the advocate of St. Valeri, I forget not the beacons he placed in my passage. I have this moment read these words:—"Be cautious in the disposal of your "hand. It requires all the wisdom and all the "acuteness you are mistress of to distinguish be- "tween the lover of yourself and the lover of your "fortune." I do not accuse you, Percival! you have uniformly acted like a friend and a man of honour: but I am miserable, and resolution and reason are exhausted. I must, I must throw off the incumbrances that bear down my soul. I am wavering upon the mode of extricating myself: help me, help me, I beseech you. I hear your answer:—"Submit to your lot."—Hear mine: I have endeavoured, wished, prayed, to model my mind according to your advice; but Percival you are in opposition to Nature, which will be obeyed.

* * * * * * * * *

St. Valeri has kept his word with me as to dice; he is no longer a gambler: but as to happiness, he is perhaps changed for the worse; he is become a saunterer, yawner, and a wearisome creature. His gaiety is exhausted, or crushed by the affairs of France: the remarks that used to please me tire by repetition even more than taciturnity. He is now esteemed a man of excellent character; that is, not having a degree of intellect which requires *conviction*, he submits to be guided by the *rules* that have been set for the multitude. Propriety is ever in his

mouth. Passions in women he conceives to be a kind of madness, and the calm succession of daily duties is, in his idea, the extent of their rights. Are not these opinions intolerable insults to a warm, animated disposition, an enterprizing head, and an enthusiastic heart? He thinks my ardour, folly; I think his coldness, insensibility. Mutually disgusted at each other's principles, how can human fortitude support the situation? In the improvement of my faculties he will not encourage me, and cannot assist.

You have, no doubt, thought that I have been spending my whole time in gaiety. Think so no longer. Ever since our return from Italy, our spirits have been daily sinking, and all the cheerfulness of the house is brought to it by our visitors. Except during the hours bestowed upon me by Lord Digby, in which we are by no means left to ourselves, and a few in which Madame de Rallon, whom I still love, comes to *badiner* with me, for Rose has been taken away lest I suppose she should be corrupted by me, I retire to my solitary boudoir, and read and dream of happiness which I never am to know. Were it not for a sense of religion, and dread of eternity, I should, on throwing down my book, or waking from my vision, take a speedy method of escaping from the wretched sensations which the contrast leaves upon my sickening heart. It is no little aggravation of my wretchedness that people think me happy, because forsooth St. Valeri is no libertine, and because we possess affluence, which I believe is the grand object of happiness with the nine-tenths of mankind: but in your mind it is composed of other materials; materials you will candidly confess not used in building for me.

* * * * * * * * *

You do not discourage an attempt at my romantic

scheme hereafter, provided it be with St. Valeri, without whom you think it is not to be accomplished: if so, adieu to hope! but no, I will not bid it farewell yet; the thought would distract me. I cannot support a negative existence, equally unaffected by pleasure or by pain. Inactivity is insupportable, and my mind without new objects becomes dull and inanimate: I must fall into stupor not to sink into despair. I am tired of mere breathing and walking about, and listening to insipidities, and I wish myself dead a hundred times a day. The wish, however, does not proceed from a disgust to life: never was I more warm and enthusiastic than at this moment, but I cannot exert my powers, and my bosom is oppressed with ineffectual struggles. If you had ever experienced this sensation you would know how to pity me, and you would not tell me to be happy because others are; for happiness adapts itself to the abode where it is to dwell. I have seen beings who would think themselves blest in the possession of the very things that constitute my misery. We cannot account for this strange and opposite formation of souls, but we are certain it does exist, and therefore, my friend, it would be folly to reproach me with an eccentricity of character which springs from nature, and which all the systematic rules of pedants cannot alter. I appeal to your excellent understanding to say whether an active mind can be happy in inactivity: is it not a glaring absurdity? The gratifications I image to myself, must, if I continue bound to St. Valeri, be for ever given up: and is it then unnatural to wish to pursue a path in which I may enjoy them? Surely the wish is reasonable; but then, say you, the means to realize it are encompassed with difficulties and dangers. What! quit your home, your husband, your station? Forsake every reality, to fly to an unknown or imaginary fate, of

which the misery would be irretrievable? To set out upon the wide ocean of the world, and to be subjected to the insults of villains? These are the remonstrances I hear, or think I hear, perpetually resounding in my ears. Yet after weighing all, after bringing to my mind the perspective of futurity, I feel disposed, shall I say resolved, rather to try my fortune upon the boundless field of chance, than to submit to the servile, degrading terms which existence now offers me. There are insolences my proud spirit cannot brook; insolences that may be seen and felt, but cannot be described. I am, in short, dependent on a man for every pleasure or comfort in life; one who can afford me few himself, yet has it in his power to withdraw all. The happy flights of an ardent mind are checked. I plod on a wearisome existence, exposed to the low ridicule of little minds, and am to be subservient to the caprices of a superior, for such the laws consider him, of one whom I astonish by a thirst for knowledge, and who disgusts me by ignorance; to whom my enthusiasm seems madness, and whose mediocrity and indifference are to me stupidity; one who is methodical, a stranger to ambition, and regardless of novelty; while my feelings are all alive, and my wishes perpetually occupied with schemes of pleasure or improvement. Thus mutually wondering at, and disgusted with each other, our hours are passed in reproaches and unavailing regrets. Is it possible that two such extremes can go through life together? After so serious an exposition of my mind and feelings, I should not be surprised if you were to ask me, "Why did "you then voluntarily, and against the warning you "received, throw yourself into his arms?" Percival, I will not tell you; at least not now: suffice it that the desire of continuing your friendship combined with a powerful impulse of fancy to make me his

wife. But, oh! how do I regret the day in which I was so weak, so foolish, so delirious, so mad, as formally to sanction a tyranny over my person which the laws render permanent!

* * * * * * * * *

When you have gone through this letter, will you still be so cruel as to alarm me on the score of fame? Will you again tell me that I shall be a lost being? What care I for fame! I want happiness. Why will my scheme be impracticable? I shall not throw down all virtue though I leave a husband. But I will have a little patience, for it is probable I shall soon have it in my power to discuss my wishes with you by conversation instead of the pen. The affairs of this country darken daily. Both St. Valeri and his brother-in-law talk of a removal to England. The intrigues of the Convention are levelled as much at fortune as at rank, and it is now plain that every man with pretensions to either will be made a victim or a beggar. If I am not mistaken, we shall be in London before Christmas, though to deal fairly with Sir William Oldham we should rather emigrate to *Florence;* but being now in a different humour, and my views altered, I shall be strenuous for England. Indeed there will be no occasion, as De Rallon's measures are already taken, and we shall accompany his family. Meanwhile let me hear again from you; and descend, descend, I beseech you, but a step or two, from the immense elevation of virtue, to the level of nature, and of the unhappy, but sincere and ever attached,

EMMA DE ST. VALERI.

LETTER LXIX.

PERCIVAL TO MADAME DE ST. VALERI.

The impetuosity of youth an enemy to happiness—Novelty—True friendship—Female reputation—Emigrés.

So it is ever; the wisdom of Solomon himself is pedantry to the bosom against whose passions it militates. Were I to discard the moral share of it you ascribe to me, so far from being elevated, I should soon sink in your opinion. In my last I endeavoured to divest myself of all bias, and to give you the best advice my understanding could suggest, but I am convinced you must wait for happiness. I begin to fear you will have none during the spring of life. When the impetuosity of youth declines, when experience teaches you that happiness depends little upon externals, and very much upon the formation of the mind, you will then begin to enjoy the excellent faculties with which you are endowed, and by their means possess a greater share of bliss than falls to the lot of many. For this, however, you must wait some years, but be not dismayed, and endeavour to curtail the intervening time by the exertions of your reason, struggling with the usual tumults of youth, and the *mistaken* PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

Your poet, and a charming poet he is, would lead you right: but then you must study him thoroughly. The lines you quote celebrate the pleasure that springs from novelty, and there is no doubt that novelty is a source of pleasure, but it is infinitely less copious and less exquisite than many others. The contemplation of an affliction borne with fortitude, or of a virtue exerted against our wishes, is far, far superior to all the gratification of new sensations,

which after all is the peculiar enjoyment of children. "As those things," says an eloquent reasoner, "which engage us merely by their novelty, cannot "attach us for any length of time, the passion of "which it is the object is the most superficial of all "the affections; it changes its objects perpetually, it "has an appetite which is very sharp, but very "easily satisfied, and it has always an appearance "of giddiness, restlessness, and anxiety. In short, "the occurrences of life, by the time we come to "know it a little, would be incapable of affecting "the mind with any other sensation than those of "loathing and weariness, if many things were not "adapted to affect the mind by means of other "powers besides novelty in them." We must not, therefore, although it naturally mixes in our pleasures and passions, lay so great a stress upon it. While thinking of the nature of novelty, an idea occurred to me, which, although it be no way applicable to mankind, I cannot help mentioning to you; and that is, that the happiest and wisest of Beings can derive no enjoyment from it: to HIM all is known, past, present, and future.

If you do not enjoy the pleasures that arise from the mixture of sensibility, virtue, and independence, be assured the fault is chiefly in yourself, by a mistake in the idea of independence. I have already said we must depend on others if we choose to live in society, but still the soul is free, and will remain so amidst all the shackles of custom.

I do understand you, my dear friend, and I wish to Heaven I could make you understand true happiness. A separation from your husband will be the very reverse of it. I am fully convinced that you will, in every respect, be a dreadful sufferer by such a step. I fear I shall but disgust you by my perseverance in my opinion; but I cannot help it: as

long as you bestow the name of friend upon me, I will, to the utmost of my power, perform the duties of friendship; and I should ill do that by an insincere and base approbation of your opinions, or by suffering my judgment to be biassed by your inclination contrary to the dictates of my understanding. Let me then repeat to you, that my judgment is, that your present lot is happiness itself compared to the prospect that awaits you in a separation. I will not pretend to persuade you to think yourself happy; I see you are not: but I have always told you that there are degrees of happinesss and misery. When once you leave your husband, remember you turn your back, not alone upon him, but upon society, and by society I not only mean your own sex, but also the most valuable part of ours. You say that in leaving your husband you do not throw down all virtue. I must, *in spite of the cruelty of it*, insist, that to a woman of sensibility her fame is an essential requisite to happiness. Do not again ask me if I think that I am lecturing a school-girl; I think no such thing: I am anxious for the preservation of a friend, of one who, blessed by nature with the noblest qualities, has to struggle with the errors that have sprung from the strength, the too early strength of her own faculties, in the culture of which she has not been properly assisted. You are too young and too unexperienced to judge of the danger of the precipice over which you are about to leap, and I should indeed have little reason to think more highly of you than of a self-willed school-girl, if you could possibly be angry at any attempt to snatch you from it. You have a long life before you, and if you mean to secure the smallest chance of happiness in it, you must preserve your fame untainted. Do not be rash, do not throw away all that is most desirable, for the gratification of a young

will, which you will sorely repent not having bridled. I feel this an important crisis for you, and I should eternally condemn myself if I suffered either indolence or flexibility to gloss over the way of your ruin, or if I did not point it out to you.

I rejoice that you are coming to England, and with St. Valeri's family. From your own account I am charmed with Madame de Rallon, and I am determined to entertain a hope that you will yet, by compliance and self-conquest, render St. Valeri an interesting and active promoter of happiness to you and to your friends. Let him not feel your superiority, and with a little dexterity you may not find it impossible to make your scheme his. He is but young, and who knows what start his mind may yet take? What a glorious reflection will it be to you, if by patience, mildness, and condescension, you shall be able to awaken it to those superior attainments and enjoyments with which you are justly charmed. I shall be happy on your account to show St. Valeri and his brother every attention in my power, as will my Julia all in hers to yourself, Madame de Rallon, and the little Rose. We already call you all our Emigrés. Adieu! and remember PATIENCE, which shall teach you to smile at all your griefs.

LETTER LXX.

SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS TO PERCIVAL.

Sir Richard straining out a conundrum bewilders himself—He mentions meeting with George Stanley.

Dear Sir,

PRESUMING, howsoever you may be otherwise disposed to disagree in your ideas with my friend, *your brother Charles*, that you would have no objection to see him well provided for, considering that *he is now totally dished*, I take up the pen to write to you to let you know what came into my head, and what I have been thinking of doing for him. Our friend Jack Stanhope thinks it's *the best thought* that could have entered the heart of a friend to all parties, and as I know you have a good opinion of *Jack Stanhope*, I have no doubt you will think so too. You know I have a great affection for your brother, and by the Lord I need not tell you I have been all along very uneasy, whenever it came into my head that he was doing himself up, and could not last. He is now *completely distilled*, and the next thing will be incaseration, if some step is not *speedily* taken to prevent it, and enable him to make some other push at fortune without the risk of being swept *with the canaille of debtors* into some horrible, pestiferous inclosure of bricks and spikes.

Being engaged to pay a visit at Cloud-cap castle to my uncle Lord Dolt, I ran my friend Timmy Gosling down in my curricle, and we talked of it all the way; but I had thought of it before, for Gosling had nothing to do in *the originality of the idea*, which was all my own, and Jacky Stanhope will tell you

that I expressed it to him long and long ago *. When we got to Cloud-cap castle, I found my uncle, Lord Dolt, dreadfully *indisposed with the megrims*, and it was some days before we could see him, and a whole fortnight after, before I recollected the circumstance, which *I did* on being put in mind of it by Timmy Gosling, who thought of it with one of *the best puns* I ever heard, on seeing one of my uncle Lord Dolt's hens under a three-corner cage, and a woman flinging some *hulled oats* to her. "Why," says he, "*is that there hen like Charley Percival?*" I tried a long while to find it out, but I was *obliged* to give it up at last, when he laughs and says; "Why, *because the person that puts him into his "cage must provide him with groats.*"—GROATS—mind the word *groats*, it all depends upon that. Though, perhaps, you mayn't know *the meaning* of it, no more than I did till Timmy explained it to me. *If so*, I must beg leave to diffuse the information by telling you that *incaserated people* have a right to call upon their incaserators for *fourpence* a day, and that I need not tell you *is a groat*. So that my uncle Lord Dolt's *hen* and *prisoners* are both fed upon groats. I beg your pardon, I could not help putting this in my letter, as it came into my head while I was writing, and as I thought you would think it *a good thing*, though at first *a little* obscure to gentlemen *unacquainted*, as you and I, *with prisons*. Timmy indeed was never incaserated *but once*, but then he is so *observant*, and has so retenacious *a memory* that nothing escapes him; though as *to wit* he seldom aims at that, and that

* The idea, when the reader arrives at it, will appear to be originally Mr. Stanhope's, but adoption and invention are very often mistaken by wiser heads than Sir Richard's, who besides, it will be remembered, complains of the frailty of his memory.

made this so much the more pleasant, coming as it were *unexpectedly* from such a man, and *perhaps* the novelty of the thing was *half the wit of it ;* but that I leave you to judge. Lord Dolt has not the *slightest* objection to it, and *the business* only waits *your answer* to be determined upon. My Lord begs his compliments to you, and mine also with my respects to Mrs. and Miss Percival.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours obediently,
R. BRAINLESS.

P. S. I met my old servant *George Stanley* the other day at Shrewsbury ; he was as smart *as a carrot*, but he had the assurance *to deny* being in your neighbourhood *lately*, and swore me out as to the affair *of the bull and Miss Percival.*

LETTER LXXI.

PERCIVAL TO SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS.

He enquires for his brother.

Sir,

I AM obliged to you for the honour you have done me in addressing a letter to me, which I assure you amused me not a little. I observe that you wrote in a hurry, as you have omitted *the business* you proposed to Lord Dolt, and to which you say his Lordship has no objection : but I confess to you I am less anxious about it than to know where my brother is, and I write purposely to request that you will inform me if you know. Mrs. and Miss Percival join me in compliments : and I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,
E. PERCIVAL.

LETTER LXXII.

SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS TO PERCIVAL.

Sir Richard pawns his honour, and also his soul—He wonders at Percival, and hunts a little learning—A liberal offer.

You do me but bare justice *upon my honour*, in imputing my oversight of not mentioning *the principal subject* of my letter, when I did myself the honour of addressing a letter to you, and I beg you will do me *the farther justice* to believe that I NEVER in my life did such a thing before. You *cannot but see* it was all owing *to my eagerness* on the subject of your brother's possible incaseration, though I beg you to be at ease, for I see your anxiety, as I assure you, *on my soul*, that I have had no information of that having YET taken place; and I am *very happy* to see *you are so uneasy* about it, as it makes it a certain thing in my mind that you will thankfully agree to the thought I have thought of, that goes *to root out* the mischief of incaseration *entirely*.

By the by, allow me to express my surprise that a man of your penetration did not immediately catch *the unexpressed idea*, as our friend Stanny says, *when he gives hints*. "I hate," says he, "your *vulgar* "understandings that wait for *common words*, give "me the genius that catches *the unexpressed idea*." Here let me observe to you, how much inferior the Roman *verbum sat sapienti* is to the French *Le Sage entend à demi mot*. By the way I forget whether this observation is *mine* or *Stanny's*, but its a good one. The Romans required a *whole word* at least, the French only *half a one:* now, many English understand *a nod or a wink*, and I heard a man of taste say, that so far was language from being *necessary* to express ideas, he never looked at a figure of

West's without knowing *what was passing in its thoughts.* There I confess he went beyond me, I can't see into *a picture's thoughts*, but I can into *a good actor's* long before he speaks. It is clear, however, you, Sir, cannot see into mine, or my uncle Lord Dolt's; and yet, *I beg pardon*, can any thing be more plain than that the best remedy for incaseration is a seat in parlament? Hollands is not more sovereign *for a wind cholic:*—though there's something wrong in my metaphor, for the one is *a preventative*, the other *an expulsive;* the one acts *by qualification*, the other *by eructation.*

But, Sir, to return to *the business* of my former letter: your brother Charles certainly behaved *very indecently* to me. You heard I suppose how he went off from Cheltenham, but Sir Richard *is above catching at straws when a friend is sinking.* So the very day that Timmy Gosling's conundrum of *the hen and prisoner* brought my friend into my mind, I stated the whole state of his ruin to my uncle Lord Dolt. Lord Dolt is a very good-natured peer, *when he has not got the megrims.* "My Lord," says I, "damn it, give him the borough of Cloud-cap, "there's a good uncle." My uncle *loves humour*, and he is always kindest to me when I say something witty to make him laugh; and so I asked him Timmy's conundrum, *as if it was quite new*, which set the peer a laughing, and he swore Charley *should be* returned for Cloud-cap, which *very luckily* happens to be vacant *by the death* of his Lordship's cousin, Commissioner Leadly, the late member. The peer bade me tell you his terms should be *very moderate*, and that, as it was a thing *absolutely necessary for Charley*, he has no doubt you will think nothing of adding five hundred to three thousand pounds, which he should expect *from any body else.* I request a

speedy answer; and with compliments to the ladies, remain, Sir,

Yours obediently,

R. BRAINLESS.

N. B. I suppose that you know that *a seat*, besides the overthrow of incaseration, will put it in Charley's power *to make terms with ministry*.

LETTER LXXIII.

PERCIVAL TO SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS.

Just indignation.

Sir,

I CANNOT be offended with your letter, because it is impossible to peruse it, and think that offence was intended. But while I enter into your character, I cannot leave you and your noble uncle Lord Dolt, or your companion Mr. Timothy Gosling, in the dark respecting mine.

I know not with what members of the British parliament you are acquainted, or from what corrupt sources you draw your knowledge or your principles, but the members I have the honour to know and call my friends, are men of the nicest feeling and purest patriotism: to purchase a seat is, in their opinion, highly criminal; to make use of the powers bestowed upon them by their constituents for the purposes of enriching themselves, an infamy that the rack would not force them to submit to; and the support they give to the government, they deem a duty arising from the conviction of the pure intentions, grand designs, and eminent abilities of his Majesty's

ministers. Sir, I am happy in thinking as they do, and although I would have given the half of my fortune to have saved my brother from the harpies that have destroyed him, and would still, to retrieve for him the mind he possessed before he had the misfortune to be introduced to the gang of knaves and sharpers that have ruined him, I would rather know that he were in prison, or dead, than believe the proposal in your letter was made with his consent. I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

E. PERCIVAL.

LETTER LXXIV.

LORD DIGBY TO PHILIP TOWERS.

Emigrés—A dilemma produced by fine eyes—Madame de St. Valeri.

Dear Philip, Dover.

THE enormities of the ruling people at Paris, and of their mobs, have driven away most of the nobility and persons of birth. St. Valeri's sisters were so alarmed, and his wife was so desirous of returning to England, that it was impossible to withstand their united entreaties, and St. Valeri and M. de Rallon, his brother-in-law, who has already made considerable purchases in the English funds, both solicited me to take charge of the family, promising to join them in London early in January. I urged all the reasoning I was master of to prevail upon them to accompany us, and Madame de Rallon and little Rosa petitioned, with all the eloquence of words

and tears united, that they would not delay the journey, but De Rallon was resolved to wait for a sum of money he was to receive at Christmas, and St. Valeri to make some arrangement as to the debts upon his estate at Ostroville, for which he was supplied by a bill on Oldham to a considerable amount. As I thought the fears of the ladies but reasonable, I consented with pleasure to take them under my care. Through means of Lord —— ——— I obtained proper passports, and every thing expedient to remove the obstructions of sections, municipal officers, and a long etcetera.

At Boulogne I was apprehensive of some trouble, as doubts had arisen respecting the features of Madame de Rallon, whose eyes were described in her passport as *non decidé*, though they were clearly dark hazle. I was fortunately well known in the town, and the party being considered as an English one, we were quit for a few fulsome compliments to the brilliancy of our friend's eyes. And now we are on English ground, and shall be to-morrow in London, where I shall carry the party to my house till they can dispose of themselves better. I have much to say to you respecting Madame de St. Valeri, but at present I can only write you a short letter to ask you to meet me in town. Just let me say, however, that the chances are a hundred to one that this beautiful eccentric creature throws herself away, and creates unhappiness to others besides. She is writing to Percival, and we imagine that our letters will still find you at Bevil-lodge. Pray let me see you or hear from you immediately.

LETTER LXXV.

MADAME DE ST. VALERI TO PERCIVAL.

She leaves her husband at Paris.

Dover.

THE date of my letter will inform you of my arrival in England. Yes, and without St. Valeri; but make yourself easy, my friend, about me; at least for the present. It is with his consent I am here, in company with his sisters, and under the protection of Lord Digby. I had begun an answer to your last, when the confusion of Paris, and the domiciliary visits which St. Valeri and M. de Rallon received from the sections, created fears among us that were followed by the step we have taken. St. Valeri at first opposed my leaving him, but in consideration of his sisters, and perhaps of a bill he drew on Sir William Oldham, for the purpose of keeping down the interest of the debt on Ostroville, he consented to our coming together. M. de Rallon and he are to follow, after they have settled some business on which they have set their minds. The carriage that has been ordered to take us on a stage to-night is waiting, so that I only took up the pen to tell you and Mrs. Percival that your emigrés are arrived, and will be happy to receive your kind attentions. Adieu!

LETTER LXXVI.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY.

Caroline's education—An unexpected letter—The doubt changed into mystery—Charles Percival—Arabella Stormont.

My dear Lord,

I HAVE been so much occupied in reading and talking with Caroline, in directing her studies, and assisting her in the management of her feelings and imagination, that I have not had time to answer your last kind letter from Paris. The native innocence of this charming young woman had been preserved pure in the education she received at her aunt's, a maiden lady who resided in the country, and abominated great towns. That education, however, had been limited to the common routine of instruction; and the knowledge of herself, of her faculties, of her passions, the habits of self-direction, self-examination, self-possession, had not been considered as parts of education, and consequently her heart had been left unprepared for the struggles which might be its lot in life. The impression that has been made upon it by the events of the autumn, and her exertions to maintain the magnanimity she admires, have had a considerable effect on her health, and it has been with a hope of excluding the sons of Hippocrates that I have been assiduously administering the medicine of the daughters of Minerva, employment.

I was going to acknowledge the Paris letter when your Dover one arrived. I should not have delayed a moment complying with your request of meeting you in Hanover-square, but that a meeting more

important has been arranged. Edward and Julia set out for town to-morrow, to welcome the emigrants and press their passing the holidays at the Elms, while I stay to go over with Caroline and the Bevils. Percival hopes to prevail upon your Lordship to be of the party, and if you have no decided engagement, which I trust is the case from the suddenness of your return, my wish would not be wanting, were it necessary, to induce your acceptance of the invitation. I shall send this by the post, that your Lordship and the party may expect our friends, and as I have time to lengthen my letter, I will add some information which I know will give you pleasure.

We were at breakfast when our messenger returned from the post with letters. On opening them your name and Madame de St. Valeri's were echoed round the table: but guess our surprise when Edward, opening one of his, exclaimed, in an elevated tone, "STANLEY!" The various emotions of the company, visible in their countenances, would have been a high treat to an indifferent observer, and was doubly so to one interested as I was. *Stanley!* was repeated by all but Caroline, whose surprise was expressed by the variation of the colour in her face. Edward read the letter first to himself, and smiled as he proceeded. The pause was a painful one to his sister, during which and the perusal of the letter Julia and Mrs. Bevil glanced eager looks at her, and Bevil, fearful of distressing her, kept his eyes on Edward, while I observed them all. "Riddle my "riddle my ree," cried Edward, before he began to read out, and then read as follows: I will copy the letter verbatim, *nota bene* and all, for it must not be lost.

" Honoured Sir, Shrewsbury.

" I am certain I never had the pleasure of being " known to you; but as Sir Richard Brainless says " he knows you have a good opinion of me, and that " you have as much as said you mean to serve me " whenever it lie in your power, I think it my duty " to write and thank your honour for your good in- " tentions towards me, not knowing how I have de- " served it; but it may be that some worthy gen- " tlemen have been kind enough to speak in my " praise to Mr. Percival, whose great goodness in " serving those who stand in need I have often " heard of, and Sir Richard said he did as much " himself. I hope your honour won't think me " proud because I don't intend to go to service any " more, as blessed be God I have come into a little " fortune by the death of a relation; but if Mr. Per- " cival knows of any post or employment about the " court or excise, I shall be bound to pray for you " as long as God shall spare my life, and I beg par- " don for making so bold, only I thought after what " Sir Richard told me, that you might be offended " if I didn't take some notice of it. As for the bull " and all that, about which he made himself so mer- " ry, I assure Mr. Percival that I know nothing at " all about the bull, but as for Triton, I always " loved the dog, though the General never cared a " brass farthing about him, which is all from, ho- " noured Sir,

" Your respectful humble servant,

" GEORGE STANLEY.

" *N. B.* Be pleased to direct to Mr. George " Stanley, at Mrs. Margaret Stanley's, corner of the " upper crescent—Shrewsbury."

Conceive, my Lord, the sensation produced all round by the *honoured Sir*, and follow our countenances line by line through the letter down to the conclusion of the N. B.; you cannot err: conviction grew up with every word, and every face was illumined with joy. There was a kind of congratulatory look passed round, and I never saw so divine a smile as irradiated the features of Caroline. As for me, I cannot tell you what pleasure it gave me. Appearances had gone a great way in my mind, I confess; but I had never thoroughly believed that the brave Stanley had been the footman of Brainless; not, however, because he was brave, not because he was good, for Brainless's George Stanley may be brave and good, and estimable; but because his manners, his notions, his ambition for mental elevation, bespoke a mind that, young as it was, had been otherwise employed than in the sciences of brushing coats and blacking shoes, or in looking out for a post about the court or in the excise. "The "enigma," said Edward smiling, "is by no means "solved. I am at no loss to know how this letter "came to be written, having been honoured with "one from Sir Richard himself, in a postscript to "which he tells me that he had been convers- "ing with George Stanley; and this farther de- "monstrates that his Stanley is a very different man "from ours: but it is still a riddle that Triton "should be an acquaintance of both and be beloved "by them."—"Is it not probable," said Bevil, "that your friend is a neighbour of General Tan- "kerville's, and that he received the dog in a pre- "sent; for you see, as the letter says, that the "General did not care a brass farthing for him." I said that that could hardly be the case, as what I had written to General Tankerville would undoubtedly have produced some intelligence respecting

any other person of the name known to him.—" It " only remains for us, my dear Edward," said Julia, " to find out who he is: but I am afraid that will not " be easy, for it must be confessed that his conduct " has been very strange. Be he who he may, our " suspicions have never reached him, and his be- " haviour at Lord Powic's is extremely unaccount- " able."—" The only way to unravel the mystery," said Mrs. Bevil, " is to take a journey to General " Tankerville's. There can be no doubt of his hav- " ing been some way connected with that family." —" One would not be too anxious to force his ac- " quaintance," said Caroline blushing. " True, my " dear Caroline," said Edward, " and therefore we " will not be in a hurry."—" Curiosity to be sure," replied she smiling, " makes one wish to have it off " one's mind."—" True," rejoined Edward, " and " therefore I think I had better take a trip soon into " Derbyshire." Julia perceiving Percival's play upon his sister, and also that she felt it, relieved her by changing the conversation to Madame de St. Valeri. " We must not forget our emigrés," said she. " I think," said Mrs. Bevil, " that you should " go to town to meet them, and bring them to the " Elms to pass the Christmas." Julia said she thought so too, and Edward being of the same opinion, our plan was arranged before we got up from table.

Percival is extremely unhappy about his brother, as no one even among his old companions has ever heard from him or of him since he left Cheltenham. I was not without hope that you might have met him in Paris, and I begin to have sad apprehensions about him. Oh, my dear Lord! what a lamentable career has his been! thirty thousand pounds, every farthing, gone; and an estate of eighteen hundred pounds a-year mortgaged to its full value, in the

course of two or three years! one can hardly conceive it. But there was scarcely a luxury, and I will do him the justice not to except that of benevolence, in which he did not indulge, or a gaming table which he did not frequent. He entertained no opinion of female honour; and though he had made it a point not to be the seducer of women, he took no care to distinguish between innocent kindness and profligate advances, so that by returning warm attentions for casual smiles, he betrayed the unwary while he thought himself courted. I have gathered this both from his conduct and his conversation, and I know several whom this error of his has rendered miserable for their lives, and I firmly believe it will be a pang to his own mind if he lives to reflect upon it. With respect to Arabella Stormont, I am inclined to acquit him of her ruin, for in fact the woman had no soul, and it is evident that neither fidelity nor choice has any concern with her amours. I have seen that Rumbold you mention. His father was master of a very swift-sailing brig, in which he traded to the Leeward Islands, and after some lucky adventures turned merchant, in which capacity he amassed a large fortune, to bequeath to this dunderhead. I have not the slightest doubt that he will leave the wretched woman in France, and that she will undergo all the misery that usually attends the depraved creatures who dishonour their sex. It is time I should conclude my letter, and I am desired by the whole party here to make their best compliments acceptable to you and the ladies, and to say that Percival and Julia hope to find you all recovered from the fatigues of your journey, and ready for another. Adieu!

LETTER LXXVII.

JULIA TO MRS. BEVIL.

A party for the Elms—Madame de St. Valeri and her new sisters.

My dear Madam,

I SHALL write but a few lines to tell you that we shall be at the Elms on Saturday, and beg you to be there before us. Edward is writing to Mr. Stockton to prepare him to receive you, but I will trouble you to inform Mrs. Burke that there will be four additional beds wanting, besides those of our own family-party when we are all met, as we shall be accompanied by Madame de St. Valeri, her two sisters, Lord Digby, and Mr. Stanhope, who meeting the party on the road between Dover and London joined them, and on being invited by Edward to continue with them during the holidays, has consented to come down with us.

I cannot tell you how much delighted Lord Digby is with our immediately coming to town: he is highly amiable in his manners, and has a very interesting and penetrating countenance. Madame de St. Valeri I have not seen since she was a girl going over to France to finish her education, but that is not very long ago, and the uncommon partiality she showed for me at the time rendered it no difficulty for me to recollect her, although she is considerably altered as to height and form. Her sentiments and mode of reasoning, of which I have heard many speak, had given me an idea of a bold, masculine person: on the contrary her appearance is replete with feminine delicacy, and altogether I never saw any thing more beautiful than she is.

She is full of life, and was in raptures at our arrival in Hanover-square, whither we immediately drove, intending to order the carriage to proceed with our baggage to an hotel, but of which my Lord would not hear a word, saying that he expected us, and was prepared for us. Madame de Rallon is also very handsome, and the little Rosa a sprightly lovely girl about fifteen years old. They speak no English, so that I am obliged to make the best of the French I learned from the Poussins; and considering the want of habit, I managed it tolerably well, I might say admirably, if I were vain enough to give ear to the flattery of these agreeable strangers.

Our best love to my dear father. Kiss our dear little Edward and Julia for us, and tell them they will see us at the Elms. God bless you, my dear mother! prays your ever fondly affectionate daughter,

JULIA PERCIVAL.

P. S. Edward being anxious to discover our young friend of Cowper's farm, and not being able to take a journey for some time to Derbyshire, has written a letter to Sir Richard's George Stanley, urging him to come to the Elms in the course of the holidays, assuring him that the subject on which he wishes to speak to him is of importance to both. I have myself no doubt we shall obtain some information from him.

LETTER LXXVIII.

SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS TO JOHN STANHOPE, ESQ.

The Baronet complains, and throws out a great temptation to his friend—Laughing fits between Lord Dolt and Mr. Gosling, in which Sir Richard joins, without knowing why—Association of ideas a happy aid to memory—Sir Richard's attempt at oratory.

Dear Stanny,

I HAVE affronted that *sanctified son of a methodist*, by asking him why his brother Charley would soon *be like a hen under a three-cornered cage in a poultry yard, fed on barley?* He is a blooddy stupid fellow, and has no relish for a pun, so he takes the simile in dudgeon, and to gratify his spleen *against my conundrum*, he lets the borough of Cloud-cap slip through his fingers, and poor Charley may rot in jail for him.

I made strong interest with my uncle, Lord Dolt, to let Charley be returned in the room of his late cousin, Commissioner Leadly, and his Lordship, *after a hearty laugh at the conundrum*, agrees to the thing, and I writes and offers it to *your sanctified friend*, and he sends me a snubby bit of answer, with a parcel of nonsensical *parsony phrases* about corrupt sources, nicest feelings, purest patriotism, &c. and ends with saying he would sooner Charley should *lie in prison* or *die and be damned:* there's a brother and a Christian methodist for you! *O mora! oh tempores!* damn the fellow! his letter gave my uncle, Lord Dolt, *a dismal megrim.* I should like to kick him. I treated him with great contempt however; I *never answered his letter:* that's the way *to show your breeding*, Stanny, treat such stuff with contempt, don't answer it. By my soul, Jack

Stanhope, if you'll revenge this, *I'll give you Mouse* to yourself. Swear to me *you'll carry off his wife*, and you need not send the mare back again: Mouse, with the gig and harness, bridle, saddle and tugs for Tandem, *all your own*.

It cost me *three whole days* to put my uncle, Lord Dolt, in good humour again; and how do you think I did it at last? One day after dinner as he sat silent, looking at nothing; he had just got down *his sixth glass of* Madeira; but mind he had previously drank *two digesters of Coniac* before the cloth was removed: at that lucky crisis I stared at him with one of my knowing looks, and says, "My "Lord Dolt, I think"——here I happened to pause, upon which he smiled and said, "Dicky, I "give you joy of it." Timmy Gosling laughed, *as he always does when the Peer does*, at which my Lord, tickled *with some conceit that he could not explain*, went into a fit of laughing, and Timmy and he kept it up for *full five minutes* without stopping; and I could not help laughing too, but then it was only because laughing is catching, for the devil a bit *did I* ever see *the mare's nest* they had found out. At last when it was over, and my uncle, Lord Dolt, had swallowed *another bumper of Madeira*, "Dicky," says he, "it is a pity THE PHENOMENUM should be "lost."—"What *phenomena*, my Lord?" said I:—by the bye my Lord did say *phenomenum*.—"Why," said he, "*your thinking*."—"Oh! I'll tell you, "my Lord," said I; and before I had time to speak, Timmy burst out a laughing again. "I beg "your pardon, Sir Richard," says he, "but there's "no resisting my Lord Dolt's wit."—"No more "there is," says I, and I laughed heartily, *to please my Lord;* and the more so as I was afraid he might find out that *I did not discover* his Lordship's wit at all; and I really thought all the time that Timmy

could not contain himself on account of the *lapsus linguæ* that had *dropped from the tongue* of my uncle, Lord Dolt, but this Timmy afterwards *denied*, and swore earnestly that it was *some wit of my Lord's* which he could not remember. However, so far my uncle, Lord Dolt, began to be in good humour, and tossing off *another bumper*, knocks the table with the foot of his glass, and cries; "*Now "for it.*" What there could be in those three words to set us off again I don't know, Timmy laughed, and I laughed, and Lord Dolt laughed, till I quite *forgot the thought* that had come into my head, and when his Lordship put the question again; "Well, Sir Dicky, what *did* you think?" I should have been totally at a loss, if *as luck would have it*, a hen hadn't *cackled under the window*. The *hen* brought *the groats* into my head, *the groats Charley Percival, Charley Percival the borough of Cloud-cap*, and *the borough of Cloud-cap* the *happy thought* that had occasioned so much merriment: and what do you think it was?—"What do you "think, my Lord," says I, "as this here Mr. Per- "cival is off, to return *your own nephew* Sir Rich- "ard Brainless?"—"Humph!" says he, "you are "no orator, Dicky."—"But," says I, "my Lord, "*orator fit*, oratory is a thing that a man may learn "if he has any ideas at all."—"Ay, but what's to "be done in *your* case?" said his Lordship; and Timmy laughed; but that he *always does* whenever Lord Dolt opens his mouth.—"No, Dicky," said his Lordship, "trust me oratory *is not* to be learn- "ed; I had a tough trial at it myself. But come, "suppose you try at it now; give us a speech, "Brainless."—I was in a cue, and I took the Peer at his word. I got up, and being on the left side I put my left foot forward, and laying my left hand on the table, I asked for a question. "*Peace or*

"*war?*" said my Lord. Upon which I thumped the board and began. I am tired of writing, Stanny, or I would send you my whole speech, for *it was a damned good one*, and both my Lord Dolt and Tim Gosling *acknowledged it:* but it's too long to remember. I spoke full five minutes, proving that war was itself pestilence and famine, and I should certainly have spoke five minutes longer, if in my warmth I hadn't unluckily used the figure of *Johnny Grott* for the *North of Scotland*. I will tell you *that*, for it was damned odd. "Mr. Speaker," said I to my uncle, but I looked at Timmy Gosling, that my Lord might see that *I knew very well* I was not speaking to the Speaker:—"Sir, it is clear to "me that the consequence of a war will be three "evils; three evils, Sir; there will be no *potatoes* "in *Ireland*, no *oats* in *Scotland*, and no *race-* "*horses* in *England:* and if so, how long do you "think that the Irish cows and peasants can live? "How can the Highlanders make such good sol- "diers? and, *a fortiori*, can race-horses run without "oats? Sir, these evils will *be general;* they will be "felt *all over Europe;* they will be felt from the "island of Scilly to *Johnny Grotts.*"—"*Grotts!*" said my Lord; "that puts me in mind of *the hen.*" —Timmy laughed, my Lord laughed, and I forgot the rest.

Yours in haste,

RICHARD BRAINLESS.

P. S. Write soon and *swear revenge*, or send me back Mouse. My uncle, Lord Dolt, *wants an orator* for Cloud-cap: do you know e'er a one with three thousand pounds to play with?

LETTER LXXIX.

FREDERICK STORMONT TO PERCIVAL.

Ineffectual struggles of a mind enslaved by passions—Seduction—Charles Percival—A return of good for evil.

Dear Percival,

FORGIVE me for not having earlier attended to the promise I gave you when leaving England, of informing you of my motions, and of the progress of my victory over a passion to yield to which you had convinced me was disgraceful. The little success I have obtained in my struggle is too good an apology. I cannot be happy, my friend: neither calm reflection nor the bustle of war can banish from my mind the remembrance of the enraptured hours I passed in courting the lovely and innocent Arabella Nugent, or the still livelier transports of my heart when I fondly believed that marriage had made her all my own. I had so entirely united all ideas of happiness with her beauty, and the possession of her love, that every enjoyment of life has seemed to me a void since I discovered my loss. I have mixed with gay assemblies, I have courted danger, I have been wounded in battle; but nothing has been able to cure the wound that was given to my peace by the infidelity of the woman whom I had taken to my bosom. Her image haunts my mind, and though I know her worthless, I cannot forget that she was lovely. I think of her crime, and I shudder for her; I think of her smiles, and long to bask in the glow they were wont to spread through all my frame. In short, Percival, my thoughts have a double train; now they run in the channel of horrors, and now they are inflamed with ignominious

love and detestable desires: now they paint her faithless, infamous, and lost; and now again I trace those looks that won my soul, and for a moment lose the sense of misery in the enchantment of remembered joys. Oh, seduction! diabolical art!—Do not, Percival, think I would wound you by alluding to the individual instance of it that has destroyed my happiness: my apostrophe is aimed at the crime alone. The devil's first crime was ingratitude; seduction was his second: second in succession, but first and foremost in mischief. By the one he damned himself alone; by the other he spread damnation, and blighted every joy.

The perturbation of my heart flows from my pen, which I took up, my friend, merely with the intention of giving you information respecting a circumstance with which I believe you unacquainted. I now fear that what I have written will appear to you to have been the consequence of it, and I am inclined to tear this and write another letter; yet, being convinced that you will take it upon my word that my overflowing misery has not been set in motion by any malignant resentment, I will send it as it is.

Charles Percival is with the Austrian army. He appears to me to be prompted, like myself, with a desire of throwing away an unvalued life. While dining with some of the officers belonging to the main body, I was told that a young Englishman of that name had lately offered his services to General Clairfait, and had distinguished himself already in some of the skirmishes that are perpetually taking place between the advanced posts, notwithstanding the season of the year. Desirous of ascertaining the person of the volunteer mentioned, I rode over to the quarter in which he was posted: do not, my dear Percival, allow your firmness to be shaken at

what I am obliged to add—I have told you he *is* with the army, of course alive: but it was my fate to meet him borne wounded towards his lodging in the village where his party is stationed. I recognized him immediately, but I remain unknown to him. I am truly sorry to tell you that the surgeon who attends him says his wounds are of a very dangerous nature. He also informed me that he seems extremely careless about a recovery. Having obtained a solemn promise from this gentleman that he would not mention my name, I have engaged him to take care that his patient should want no aid that money could purchase. This I thought due to our friendship, my dear Percival, and I thank God that I feel myself capable of acting in the same manner, even had there been no such motive for my conduct. I wish he may yet live to enjoy better pleasures than those he has been accustomed to. He may be happy, for he has lost nothing but what he may retrieve. I will not add the thought that now rises accompanied with a sigh and tears; but I will frankly tell you that while I am sincerely expressing this wish, I fear the event of his present situation will render it fruitless.

Pray let me hear from you immediately. The army is likely to remain in its present position; at all events wherever the head-quarters are I shall be found; in the meantime I beseech you to make yourself as easy as the nature of my intelligence will permit, and rest assured, that although I take no visible part in Charles's situation, every attention shall be paid to him that he ought to receive as your brother. Adieu!

LETTER LXXX.

PERCIVAL TO FREDERICK STORMONT.

Revenge not the passion of a noble nature—Charles's errors extenuated—A sudden journey.

GENEROUS, noble Stormont! oh that to these epithets I could add that of happy! your letter has indeed affected me extremely; doubly affected me. My brother at the point of death, perhaps, and sustained by a man whom he has injured! How does my heart thank you, my friend, for such an elevated view of nature! Let our modern philosophers compare this with the passion of revenge, and dare if they can to call the latter, nature. How is the weakness I have ascribed to you in one passion counterbalanced, forgotten, lost, extinguished in the greatness of soul you now display! Who will now listen to the misanthrope when he talks of vice as nature? No, Stormont, virtue is its essence: all the rest, however wide dispersed, is but the blight of some diabolic blast, which we cannot trace in its coming, though made but too sensible of it by its effects.

I am very unhappy, my dear friend, at Charles's situation. How do I pray that his life may be spared! Why did he thus hazard it? We have all reason to deprecate a hasty death, and he should rather have wished for time. I write to you in haste, and with great emotion. I shall perhaps see you before you receive my letter, and therefore I shall not lengthen it. I shall set out immediately for the Low Countries, for, discouraging as your letter is, I cherish a hope that I shall yet converse with Charles, perhaps recover his health, perhaps retrieve his mind. Oh! let me assure you, Stormont, it was originally a good one. I remember a thou-

sand interesting incidents of infancy and youth which would convince you that his errors, his failings, excuse me if I do not say his crimes, are the unnatural distempers of contagious associates. Think not, however, that I defend him to you, with whose noble spirit he needs no defender: but I am uneasy, I am unhappy.

Lord Digby, who was at the Elms when I received your letter, has kindly expressed a wish to accompany me, and we shall not lose a moment of time. If you receive this before you see us, expect us immediately after. My friend, my dear Stormont, you deserve to be happy. Providence, I trust, has ordained that time shall soften your feelings and sorrow. I entreat you to think of quitting the army and returning with us, or at least of following us soon. May our meeting be propitious to this request!

LETTER LXXXI.

JOHN STANHOPE TO SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS, BART.

Revenge sworn—Sarcastic flattery—A little learning in Greek—How a clamour may be raised in every part of the kingdom against a war—Lord Chopstone—Mr. Stanhope's reason for thinking the English government a good one—Sentiment—A friendship secured—An unexpected meeting and its consequences—Events and adventure at the Elms.

My dear Sir Richard,

No wonder that you and Percival should not agree upon points in which you differ so materially. He is an odd fish, but rest your heart content, Mouse is mine and the gig, with its etcetera, for I swear

revenge not only on the fanatical fool who has dared to insult my friend, but on the proud brunette who has treated me vilely. I'll tell you *all how and about it*, Baronet: *bloody* scurvily has she treated me; and I have a plan, Dicky, which I will digest before I send off this letter, and when I have digested it, not the devil himself, with all the guilotines, racks, and halters, in France and England, shall deter me. In the meantime I'll try to compose myself by scribbling to you.

I have a great deal to tell you, but first let me say, I like your letter amazingly. Your observations on the unmeaning laugh of your uncle, Lord Dolt, and Gosling were excellent. As for Mr. Timothy, I need not tell you, Sir Dick, that

> He'll take suggestion as a cat laps milk,
> And tell the clock to any business that
> We say befits the hour.

You will be at no loss, Baronet, to know whence I take this quotation, nor perhaps the following which I think applicable to the *lapsus linguæ* of the word *phenomenum*. But faith I forget now, Dicky, whether you much care about being thought up to Greek. You did use to τυπτω, τυψω, τετυφα: however, if you have forgot it, you may pass it over and say nothing about it. The lines I mean are these:

> Α λιττλε λεαϛνινγ ις α δαγγερϑς θινγ
> Δϛινκ δεεπ ορ ταστε νοτ θε Πιεριαν σπϛινγ.

I was charmed with the short passage you sent me from your speech, and think the three evils the three best things I ever heard. I wish you would give a hint of them to whatever member may be returned for Cloud-cap; for, depend upon it, they would make a very great impression not only on the house but on

the nation at large: for, if the war is to put an end to the growing of potatoes, oats, and race-horses, you will most certainly have a clamour against it in every part of the kingdom.

Having now replied to the principal points of your delectable letter, I will tell you what has been happening to me: all how and about it, Sir Dicky. After spending some pleasant time near Ashford, in Kent, whither I told you I was going, I accidentally fell in with Lord Chopstone, whom I had met in the autumn in Oxfordshire. He had been at Tunbridge and Maidstone, and was going down to Dover. On a conversation with him, I allowed myself to be persuaded to accompany him. I tell you this, because it is of importance to the scheme that has entered my head. You know, Dick, that I don't care a damn about politics: the government that secures plenty of cash and pleasure is the government for me; and for those, where is there one in the world like our own? My Lord, however, made no scruple of abusing it, and before we had gone a stage together, he not only told me his opinions, which as we went along he demonstrated to be the only genuine and natural ones, but he asked me to state mine to him candidly. Now that's what I never do to strangers. Candour is for bosom friends, such as you, Sir Richard: not that I repelled his Lordship: I told him a story or two, by which, though they contained not a sentence of my own opinion, he firmly believed that his principles and mine were alike, and he thinks better of me than if I had uttered the finest political maxims or moral sentiments in favour of the equality of nature. The day of sentiment is past, Dicky: he who is so weak as to attempt it damns himself at once; ay, even if he means what he says. He must be a raw chap who moralizes now, unless, like Percival, he makes a

group of his own, and defies both ridicule and suspicion. To make one's way in these times a clever fellow does not address the heart; no, he soars to the head: he tickles the fancy, he enlivens the spirits, and carries every thing before him. You are yourself a dab at this mode, Sir Dick; you gain affection by amusing, you captivate by entertaining.

But to return to Chopstone, who I believe never captivated any body by his logic: I went with him all the way to Dover. At first I thought he meant to cross the channel, and I was surprized to find that all his business was to converse with some smugglers who live upon the coast there. He then told me he had been disappointed in not meeting some French patriots, and that he intended to remain sometime at Dover, or in the neighbourhood. I felt no desire to continue his companion, and having sufficiently made him my friend by pleasant and equivocal contradictions of his opinions, which humoured his propensity for demonstrating, I took my leave of him, promising to visit him when he returned to Oxfordshire.

My next adventure was a most unexpected meeting at Canterbury with Lord Digby, Madame de St. Valeri, whom I knew a little as Miss Coverley, and two emigrant ladies. They supped and staid all night at the inn where I had put up, which gave me an opportunity of insinuating myself into the party, who brought me to town the next day in their coach. I was doubly glad of it, for the weather was no longer *giggish*, and I consigned Mouse to the care of my man, who drove her gently up to town, where she has been in winter-quarters ever since. Percival and the lovely though cruel Julia came to London the very next day to meet the travellers, whom they engaged to go and spend the Christmas holidays in Oxfordshire. They both so warmly insisted on in-

cluding me in the festive plan, and Julia's eyes were so irresistible, that I attempted no resistance, and in a few days we posted down to the Elms, where we found the party from Bevil-lodge. The time passed very agreeably; Madame de St. Valeri was all life, while Julia was divine in every thing she said and did, and I was not sorry to find that she did not draw herself up on many broad occasions afforded her by Madame de St. Valeri, who professes more enlarged and liberal notions than Percival's wife has yet dared to do. From time to time I made rhymes on the women, which pleased and were praised. Even Towers, from his seat in the higher regions of Parnassus, deigned to smile and applaud *my pretty verses;* declaring that the light poems that charm a friendly circle are to them as important as the bolder flights of poetry.

To add to the amusement of the circle, Lord Chopstone returned to his seat in the neighbourhood in Christmas week, and brought with him his contrast, that good tempered fellow Lightless. I am in no humour for it at present, or I could paint you some pleasant scenes enough, in which this down-throat-thrusting Lord and his flexible friend were laughably opposed upon the canvass by Madame de St. Valeri; the one perpetually loud and syllogizing, the other mild, smiling, and always *somehow, he did not know how, struck* with whatever the last speaker said to him. But I have more important points to discuss with you, Sir Dick, and have no time to cast away on those heterogeneous subjects of the empire of ridicule.

To come closer to the point, then, my friend, for I write diffusely and learnedly, because I know it's to your taste; you are to know—I think I see your surprise—that Charles Percival is dying or dead of the wounds received in a skirmish between some

Austrians and a party of French; for it seems that on leaving Cheltenham he went over to the seat of war in the Low Countries, and attached himself to the army of General Clairfait. The news of his being wounded was received at the Elms the day after Christmas-day in a letter written to Percival; and by whom do you think? Frederick Stormont, by Heavens! who is himself at the Austrian head-quarters. The news affected Percival very much, and he resolved to set off instantly for the Continent. Lord Digby and Mr. Towers both proposed to travel with him, but it was arranged that the latter should remain, his Lordship being very strenuous in his desire to accompany Percival. They went away together on the very day the letter was received, after it was decided that the rest of the party should continue at the Elms till they heard from the travellers.

The absence of Percival inspired me with a resolution to make a bold attempt. I had become in reality completely enamoured of Julia: her beauty was heightened by the affability and smiling attention with which she conducted our friendship, and I will still stake my life to make her mine. I felt a trepidation, I know not why, that withheld me from making an advance for two days after Percival's departure. She is an uncommon creature, and I was therefore at a loss how to proceed. The usual approaches of eyes, sighs, knees, and toes, with such a woman, and in such a party as surrounded her, would have been just as wild as opening trenches before the rock of Gibraltar. On the third night, however, during supper, as I sat next to her, I inadvertently sighed and pressed her knee. Guess my astonishment, when without moving, she looked at me with a smile, and said, "Are you ill, Mr. Stanhope? you are pale." The fact was, I trembled and was pale: and glad

enough to seize the opportunity of retiring, I assured her I was taken suddenly ill, made an apology, and bade the company good night.

When I got to my room, I was infinitely puzzled to account for her smile; but, far from being encouraged, I considered it as the death warrant of her friendship. A desperate thought now entered my head, and I was counselled by my passion to steal to her chamber, wait for her, and like another Tarquin, terrify her with death and slander. I dismissed my man for the night, locked the door on leaving my room, and explored my way by the light of the moon to hers. I found it open, entered, and had scarcely time to get into a closet, that stood open to invite me, when Julia and her mother came in together laughing. I gave myself up for lost. They whispered something that did not reach my ear. I then heard them walking about the room, and talking distinctly enough of Madame de St. Valeri. They passed the closet door several times: and at last, one of them turned the key which was on the outside, and locked me in. Judge of my feelings, Sir Richard. I flattered myself, however, that I should soon have an opportunity of a happy release from the hand of Julia herself. The clock struck twelve; no Julia came: the family had indulged in later hours during the holidays. It struck one; still I heard no Julia: the house had seldom been up so late; it might happen, however. It was a bitter cold night; I began to wish myself by the fire that had been prepared for me in my own room. Oh! how the hour dragged on to two! It struck, and I damned my ill-star. My limbs were benumbed; my blood was freezing, and scarcely circulated: Julia herself, had she appeared, could not have thawed the ice that clung about my heart. I made an effort to burst the door open. That I could not have done with

all my strength; how vain then the attempt enfeebled as I was! I felt about for something to wrap round me: there was nothing in the closet but some of Julia's caps and hats. I put on one of these to preserve my ears from falling off. The frost was severer than ever I felt it in my life. When it struck three, I sat down on the floor, more dead than alive, with my knees to my mouth, and my teeth chattering in my head. Knowing the tendency of extreme cold to produce an eternal sleep, I began to entertain serious apprehensions for my life, and thought to avert the danger by raising myself and jumping about the closet. With some difficulty I rose, but after one or two nervous motions of the thighs and elbows, I found myself deprived of active power, and was fain to resume my chattering position with my chin upon my knees, and my hands thrust into my bosom.

I could now have consigned to damnation all that bore the name of Percival. It was clear to me that my Lucretia had changed her room. It was equally evident that I could not escape unseen, and it was by no means certain that I should not perish in the cursed closet before any one came to open it; I therefore resolved to brunt the malice of a discovery, and between four and five o'clock in the morning, I began to roar as loud as I could to make myself heard: but I apprehend my Stentorian powers were also enfeebled, for though it seemed to myself that I roared like a lion, not a creature in the house was disturbed.

Just as the clock struck five I heard the door of the chamber open. I listened; it might be Julia: it was Julia. As she set her candle on the table, she gave a deep sigh, and uttered my name: "Oh, "Stanhope!" said she, "why did I ever see thee!" The sigh and words which six hours before would have vibrated on every nerve of my frame, barely

struck the torpid tympanum of my ear: my very heart was benumbed, and I would have resigned all the flame a hundred Julias could have raised by love, for that which her maid could have produced by the application of her candle to the grate. Being, however, assured of the emotions of her heart, which, though she had stifled them before me, broke out when she thought herself alone, I would have returned the sigh. I thought I did, but if I did she heard me not. I attempted a louder one, but the wind in its vent took an odd kind of a key between a squeak and a groan. "Who's there," cried she. "Julia!" said I, as passionately as a frozen tongue could express her name. "Heavens!" answered she, "whose "voice is that?"—"Stanhope's," said I, "Stanhope, "who loves you to distraction; but for God's sake "open the closet door or I shall die." She came towards the closet, then stopped as if undetermined. In the meantime I tried to rise, but in vain: I was frozen to the spot, and sat bent as I have described to you. "Stanhope!" repeated she, "and in my "closet!"—"Oh, Julia!" said I, "have mercy; let "me out, and do not repent the confession you "made, when you thought yourself unheard."—"But I am afraid," she replied, "to open the door. "If I do, Stanhope, will you promise me to be "cool?"—"Oh!" said I, while all my bones rattled again, "you will find me cool enough."—"So you "say now," cried she, "but I know how warm you "are."—"Cold as death, Julia," replied I: "Nay, "I shall die with cold, if you keep me here any "longer."—"Patience, dear Stanhope," said she, "I hear somebody coming." At that instant several persons entered the room, and she stepped up to the closet door, which she unlocked and threw wide open. I was a little confused, Sir Dicky, to be sure; and even frozen as I was I seemed to petrify, when

on casting my eyes towards the room I perceived the whole party I had left at table, and most of them with lights in their hands. Deceitful woman! You now see, Baronet, that the sigh and the *Oh Stanhope!* were cursed flams of hers, while she was preparing confusion for your friend. They all burst out a laughing, and well they might, for a most truly ridiculous figure did I make; perishing with cold, my teeth chattering, bent chin and knees together, with a straw-hat over my toes, and a fine laced cap over my ears. Oh! damn it, I shall never forget it; and damn me if ever I forgive it.

There I sat in my cage, no more able to move off my bottom, Dicky, than a screwed mandarin from a chimney-piece, while they laughed much longer than your uncle Lord Dolt and Tim Gosling did. At last Madam Lucretia made a fine sentimental speech ready cut and dry, which I suppose she had learned from her methodistical husband for the purpose, if ever she should be attacked. But I'll teach her to moralize by and by. Not one of them spoke but herself, and then they all went off laughing together, leaving a candle. My man was sent to me, and by his assistance I got back to the room I had quitted, where he managed to make up a good fire from the remains of the one I had left when my evil genius tempted me to go in quest of an adventure. I never felt such excruciating torments, Sir Richard, as in renewing the circulation of my blood: I would sooner die than undergo the operation again.

You may be sure I did not stay to do myself the pleasure of breakfasting with the merry party. The moment daylight appeared, I mounted my hunter, which my fellow Thomas had brought down to the Elms a day or two after I left town with the company from Hanover-square. Knowing that Chopstone was prepossessed in my favour, and being mas-

ter of his weak side, I immediately rode over to his seat, which is but six miles distant, and told him the story in such a manner as completely to make him my friend. I find he has been refused by the sister, and now hates the whole family. I have consulted him on my revenge, and laid before him a plan which pleases him highly. He will assist, but not openly. You, my friend, I have no doubt will also assist, ostensibly or privately as you please. Remember it is a common cause.

I need not tell you, Dicky, that I have run myself low. Some cash will be wanting; but our revenge will be mutual. Write to me immediately, and let me know if you can be at Lord Chopstone's before the end of the week. His Lordship bids me say that he will be happy to see you. Don't fail, and so for the present, *vive & vale!*

LETTER LXXXII.

SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS TO JOHN STANHOPE, ESQ.

Revenge backed—Mr. Gosling, Pope, and Homer—Lord Dolt's opinion of the three evils.

Dear Stanny,

DEPEND upon my being with you some time on Saturday. *I can't before:* so tell Lord Chopstone, with my compliments. I never heard of such treatment before. I'll not spare *for some hundreds*, Stanny, *to be revenged* on these people, both on your account and on my own. I tell you I will be with you *on Saturday*, when I hope your plan will be ready for execution. If *Tarquin stabbed Lucretia*, why should not *Stanhope stab Julia?* Nothing so

easy as to get over the water, and there Lord Chopstone has plenty of friends for you. I'll go with you for a while, Stanny, to keep up your spirits. Damned scurvy trick indeed! You must not bear it. You cannot shew your face till you are revenged. No that's impossible.

A very nice letter though. Do you know, Timmy is not the numskull I took him for. Why he read off the Greek in English, just as if he had been Pope himself translating Homer; for he said it was Pope, and laughed. Gosling is given to laughing: it's a pity; it makes him look so foolish when there's nothing to laugh at. Zounds! what would he have done if he had seen you in Mrs. Percival's laced cap! or if I had only shown him that part of your letter! I write in bluddy haste, as my uncle, Lord Dolt, has sent for me to hear a pun of Timmy's so *vive & vale!*

Your faithful

R. BRAINLESS.

P. S. I am glad you like the three evils—my uncle, Lord Dolt, says they do very well for a room but would not do for the House.

LETTER LXXXIII.

JULIA TO PERCIVAL.

The bulwark of female virtue—The closet adventure related by Julia—A prescription for the use of seducers—A postscript written by Madame de St. Valeri.

At length, my dearest Edward, your Julia has been initiated into the first degrees of the art of seduction I know you too well, Percival, to fear that you will suffer your indignation to precipitate you into the folly of risking your life and my happiness, or I

should be more uneasy than I am at the event that took place at the Elms a very few days after your departure. The dependence I have on your principles, and on the firmness of your character, has enabled me to treat it with the lightness it deserves, and renders it an easy task to me to continue that unbounded confidence in my Edward, from which my fond heart has not once deviated since I could call him mine.

Situated as you may possibly be with your brother when this letter arrives, I doubt whether I should venture on my communication at present, but why not? If Providence has inflicted upon you the grief you had just grounds to fear from Mr. Stormont's letter; the story I have to tell will not augment it: it may indeed break in upon it, and you are too kind to me to indulge immoderate sorrow. I pray to Heaven the reverse may be the case! and that Charles may be enjoying and returning the delight of your affectionate friendship! If so, give him a shake of the hand for me, and tell him that his sister ardently longs to see him at the Elms.

And now let me draw your attention to the gallant Mr. Stanhope; yes, Stanhope. Could you have supposed it, Edward? You are not more surprised than I was: for, from the first moment of our acquaintance with him, he never betrayed the slightest indication of gallantry; nor, on the other hand, did he take any pains to appear scrupulous; but by an even tenour of delicate and agreeable behaviour, he gained our good opinion and our friendship. I now see how completely he is master of his art, and I cannot but pity my sex when I find that there are such consummate demons of seduction mingling with them in the paths of life. My dear Edward, I will not pay you the fulsome compliment of ascribing my safety to your full possession of my heart: I

cannot love you more than I do; but never should a woman trust her defence to the force of any of her passions. It is principle, and principle alone that should be the bulwark of female virtue. So agreeable, so artful a man as Stanhope will find it no difficult task to set passion in opposition to passion; and the best meaning of our sex, unacquainted with the nature of their emotions, and untaught to connect them habitually with virtue and religion, would be in the utmost danger of becoming a prey to so accomplished a seducer. It is not easy to distinguish between the innocent emotions of pleasure we receive from attentions, and the passion of vanity. There would be no living in society were women obliged to bar up all the avenues of flattery, in doing which genuine kindness must be also excluded; for very often there is no knowing at first the one from the other. Time alone shows the difference, and then is the direction given by vanity or by principle. A vain woman is so blinded with the idea of the conquest gained by her beauty that she attributes nothing to the selfish ends of the seducer. Her emotions are set in action, and step by step she is led to her destruction. But a woman who has been convinced that a conquest obtained by her beauty in the very face of the principles of religion and morals is insult and ignominy, is roused by the very first descent of open admiration and friendly intercourse to *private praise* and *secret marks of passion:* her principles dispel all mist from before her eyes, she detects the cloven foot, shudders at the demon in the human form, and calls upon her friends to assist in exorcising it. My dear Edward, you love me too well, and know me too well, to think that I am attempting to glorify myself in your eyes. No indeed: but these thoughts rise in my mind, when I think of the warfare my poor sex has to maintain

against the arts of seduction. Oh! that every girl had Bevils for her parents, and a Towers for her friend!

But let me not keep you in suspense. You and Lord Digby were hardly gone before I perceived a sensible alteration in Mr. Stanhope; but one that did not give an opening for me to suspect what was passing in his mind. He was thoughtful, absent, and I feared ill; but as he resumed his gaiety at times, the appearance was unnoticed. On the third night at supper, he took a chair between Madame de Rallon and me, and was silent till a little before the cloth was removed, when addressing some words to her, he pressed his knee against mine, which he prevented me from thinking accidental by continuing the pressure, and accompanying it with a sigh as he turned to me. I was confounded, yet I would have passed it off, that I might have had time to consult my dear mother; but he was so pale and agitated on my looking at him, that I could not help smiling, and asking him if he were ill. He declared he was, and begged to retire.

As soon as supper was over, I called my mother out with the intention of telling her my thoughts on what had occurred to me. The moon giving a good light, I took no candle, but led her to my bed-chamber. We had got to the top of the flight of stairs on which it is, when, looking towards the end of the gallery, we plainly saw Stanhope go into my room. The doubt I wished to entertain now vanished, and I hurried on, that in case he should have seen us, and been disposed to a retreat, he might not effect it without a discovery. We entered the room laughing almost immediately after him. I pointed to the closet, and whispered to my mother to talk on an indifferent topic. We walked up and down the room, and I carelessly turned the key of the lock of

the closet door, being confident that he was within. To be certain that he was not concealed by the bed, I looked under it and searched the curtains, and we then left the room. In the gallery I explained my suspicions to my mother, which now wanted no proof, yet we proceeded to his chamber. We found it locked, and the key taken out. We tapped, and beat against the door. We expected no answer, and our expectation was not disappointed.

Satisfied with having caged our monster, we deliberated on the conduct to be pursued, and my mother advised that we should communicate it to the whole party on our return to the parlour, and concert a scheme to expose him. This had nearly been defeated by the indignation that broke out in my father and Mr. Stockton, who proposed to turn him neck and heels out of the house. Madame de St. Valeri and Madame de Rallon laughed heartily: so did my mother; and Towers taking the same part, soon soothed my father and Mr. Stockton into good humour, and they joined the laugh on his proposing to let the closeted hero enjoy the sharp frost that had been set in for some days. The occurrence afforded us conversation both serious and amusing; and as the time passed agreeably, we determined on all going together to let him out before we went to bed. The time of his release was protracted from hour to hour by laughable debates on the sufficiency of his punishment, and it was five o'clock before we were unanimous for releasing him.

Before we left the parlour, it was suggested by Towers that there was a possibility of his endeavouring to account for his having concealed himself in the closet, and he thought it would not be amiss to put that out of his power by a little stratagem that had come into his head, which was, by some encouragement on entering my room to give him an

opportunity of exposing his views before I opened the closet. Accordingly we proceeded up stairs, each having a chamber-candle, that the spectacle of a shivering gallant might not be spoiled by the want of light. My companions walking very softly stopped at the door, while I went in alone, and, as directed by Towers, heaved a sigh, and said in a soft accent, "Oh, Stanhope! why did I ever see "thee!"—It produced the effect our friend foresaw. He called to me, declared himself distractedly in love, and begged me not to retract the secret confession I had made. Nor did he forget to beg that I would open the door of his cage, which, after a joke upon the *warmth* he felt, I did, and at the same time, the company all walked in, and formed a semicircle about him. To laugh had been determined, but had we on the contrary determined not to laugh, to refrain would have been impossible. He sat shivering, head and knees together, with his feet in a hat of mine, and his face almost covered with one of my caps, which he put on to defend his ears from the cold. He did not utter a syllable, and he must have suffered prodigiously from the effect of the frost. It had been agreed that we should stare at him, laugh, and leave him, without speaking; but I could not resist the opportunity of bestowing a moral upon him. I told him that a seduced female was an angel in comparison with her seducer, whom Providence sooner or later failed not to punish: I assured him, in behalf of my sex, that if seduction were his plan, he might depend upon meeting a hundred similar mortifications for one infamous triumph; and I advised him, if it were an inherent distemper of his soul, to try as a remedy for it the prescription I had now given him of freezing, of the efficacy of which our party left him to judge. We again laughed, quitted the room, and

ordered his footman to be sent to him. On separating, I took part of Caroline's bed, and you may suppose we were none of us early risers, except the hero of the evening, of whom we saw no more, and who, we heard, rode off with his man, bag and baggage, by day-light.

Such, my dearest Edward, is the ridiculous story, which I should be sorry you were first made acquainted with by any other pen than that of your Julia. As for Stanhope, I repeat that I know your honour and your principles too well to fear that you will follow the common impulse of passionate men. I cannot tell you how much I admire Mr. Stormont for his conduct; and his courage cannot be doubted. At the same time I will own to you, that I am by no means of opinion that Stanhope has experienced the punishment due to so consummate a villain, and I am sorry to find, in the course of conversation, that there is no law in the English code that can reach him. The worst of it is, that his crime, though most infamous, may among many people be glossed over by his talents and easy manners. Good Heavens! that women should be the dupes of show! This fellow will make many a one curse the hour she was born, and it is a great pity that he cannot be shut up for life.

You may imagine our party have had a good deal of conversation on the subject. I love Madame de Rallon for the sentiments she has expressed upon it, but I am not quite so much charmed on the occasion with Madame de St. Valeri; though I never saw any one more entertained with a ludicrous scene than she was with the ridiculous figure Stanhope made. She said I was cruel, and that she would not have acted in the manner I had done; that men were not to be blamed, for they all knew that gallantry was expected by women; and a hundred

other extraordinary things, which she sometimes spoke seriously and sometimes equivocally, so that she might be supposed in jest. Madame de Rallon managed her with great good humour. She said very pleasantly, that women were by no means wrong in expecting gallantry from men in general; it was their prerogative: but then it was a gallantry that consisted in delicate attentions, and in that protection and assistance which the weakness of their sex naturally demanded, not a gallantry that aimed a stab at their peace, of which the inevitable consequence was misery, and that too attended with the contempt of the very person who caused it; for what was better known than that it is characteristic in the seducer to despise the woman he ruins? I could have hugged this amiable French woman: and Madame de St. Valeri could only laugh and say, "You talk it well for a woman of fashion."

I cannot help feeling an affection for Madame de St. Valeri, for there is evidently great goodness in her heart, as well as sweetness in her countenance: and could the unfortunate bias of opinion she has contracted on the topics of nature and custom be set right, she would be an amiable and charming creature; but at present I think her a dangerous companion for young people. It is very fortunate for Rose de St. Valeri, that she has such a guide as her excellent sister; and as for our Caroline, dear girl! the unbounded confidence with which she treats me sets me at rest respecting her. I am endeavouring to win Madame de St. Valeri's affection and good opinion, with a view to divert, if possible, her wild idea of philosophical nature into the channel of moral nature, which is the nature of the human species. I confess to you, my dear Edward, that I tremble for her; but I will become your associate in the task of saving her, and may the God of Na-

ture and of Virtue be propitious to our design! May he also be favourable to our prayers respecting your brother! May you bring him back with you! and we shall be happy indeed.

Your little Edward and Julia are well. Madame de St. Valeri says she hopes there is no crime in being in love with the boy, and she is perpetually kissing and fondling him. I need not tell you that the kindest regards follow you; but I will repeat, what I know you are pleased to have repeated, the love of your

JULIA.

POSTSCRIPT *written in an envelope.*

I am under the necessity of giving a new envelope to my letter, which after sealing I brought down and laid on the table for Towers to direct, and while I was attending to something else, Madame de St. Valeri filled the back of it as you will see.

A Note to Percival, written on the back of Julia's Letter, by Madame de St. Valeri.

This wife of yours I suppose has been making out a pretty ridiculous story about her friend, the captivating Stanhope; and I'll lay my life she has well larded it with moral sentences upon gallantry; but observe, unread, I protest against them. It is all her own fault: I should be glad to know what business she has to be handsome. I declare I should not have been half so long mealy-mouthed about it as the fascinated and cruelly frosted enamorato was, but you and this Julia are both of you odd creatures. I shall vote for your being put together into some Museum, and over the door it shall be written: *Here may you see a man and woman of the moon.* I hope your brother is recovering, and that you will bring him back to the Elms with you. Mr. Towers tells

me he is handsomer than you are: I have just room to squeeze in, I don't believe him.

E. DE ST. VALERI.

LETTER LXXXIV.

JULIA TO PERCIVAL.

Mr. Stanhope's pious resolution—An atrocious piece of villany—Julia in danger—She is rescued, and by whom.

LITTLE did I think, my dear Edward, when I sent off my last letter, that I should so soon have to communicate a still more atrocious piece of villany than the one I have described to you. I had heard of desperate wretches, who, defying God and man, had committed murders and every sort of crime without apprehension of the consequence to themselves, but it never entered my mind that a being capable of reasoning, a polished man, however he might be betrayed by his opinions of female frailty to base and foolish attempts, could have plotted the brutal and impracticable scheme of carrying off a woman by force. Have patience, I beseech you, my dear Edward; I have a history for you, that will not only surprise, but enchant you: a history that forms one of the myriads of proofs that Providence superintends the events of life. Do not be vexed; do not be even sorry: I am not. I am only grieved that there is so much wickedness on earth as there has appeared in the conduct of this miserable man: but as to the action itself, I do not even consider it in the light of an insult. It is a horrid crime against the laws, to which the villain has now rendered himself amenable; but I trust you will concur with me in thinking the agent no more

a subject of private resentment than an earthquake or a storm would be from which I had been fortunate enough to escape.

Oh! how I hope that Charles may be better when this is delivered to you, but in every event I depend upon the fortitude and greatness of my Edward's mind, to counteract the influence of his emotions; and with this dependence I will proceed to give him an account of the desperate villany of the wretch Stanhope.

Worked up, as he confessed to me, to a pitch of madness by the fury of his passions, which now also impelled him to revenge, he determined, at the risk of his life, to carry me off from the Elms. He was aware that I was in the habit of walking on fine mornings to see poor Mrs. Dyer, who, since the death of her child, had admitted of no consolation but mine; that I sometimes took Caroline with me, but more frequently went by myself; and he knew that the road was lonely enough to serve his purpose.

On Thursday last, the morning was very fine, the air being clear and pleasant though frosty, and I set out without any companion about ten o'clock. I was a little surprised to see at the parting of the roads where one leads to the highway, and the other to Mrs. Dyer's, a post-chaise, the post-boy off, and adjusting his traces. No suspicion, however, entered my mind, and I proceeded. As I approached, the boy got upon his horse, yet still kept doing something to the harness: but no sooner was I opposite to the chaise door, than two men with crapes over their faces rushed out, seized me, and hurried me into it. Dreadful, indeed, were my feelings at that moment, and I screamed with terror. One of them threatened to stop my mouth if I made a noise, but the other never spoke. I assured them they

were mistaken, told them who I was, and entreated them to release me, offering to pay double the reward they were to receive for taking me away. "Take care," said the person who spoke, "if you "attempt to cry out, I have an instrument to put "across your mouth; but sit still and you shall not "be hurt." I had now no resource left me but my tears, and fortunately they flowed copiously.

Having mentioned my name, their perseverance convinced me that there was no mistake; and from the offer of the double reward making no impression, I suspected that the chief agent was himself one of the persons. Stanhope rushed into my mind, and I immediately concluded that the mute could be no other man; but that was not corroborated either by his figure or his unnecessary silence. After travelling more than an hour at a considerable rate, the chaise crossed the London road, and in about five minutes after stopped at a deserted shell of a house in a ruinous state. At the back door, to which the chaise drove up, stood a horse ready saddled and with holsters. Here I was taken out of the carriage, and hurried into one of the apartments, where I found a chair, and a table with wine, water, and biscuits, which had been evidently provided for the purpose. In a few minutes I heard the voice of Stanhope imprecating the most dreadful oaths. "It was not my fault," said the man whom I had heard speak in the chaise; "you told me "to bid it be at the village by twelve."—"Well, "well," answered Stanhope, moderating his tone for fear of provoking his accomplice, "I believe I "did. I will rectify it: do you make the best of "your way across the fields, and get home; leave "the chaise to me." Of that man I heard no more, but presently Mr. Stanhope himself appeared before me.

Indignation was my first emotion; but recollecting that I was in his power, I determined to try address. "Come, Sir," said I, "do not urge on "your designs to the tragedy in which they must "inevitably terminate, if you proceed. Even yet "desist, and I pledge you sacredly my word to use "every effort I am mistress of to restore you to the "good opinion of my friends, and you will deserve "it; for the virtue that you will display by conquering yourself at this moment, and restoring me to "them, will a thousand times outweigh the folly "that prompted your conduct at the Elms; and "the nobleness of your voluntary sacrifice will consign to oblivion the ridicule you suffered. You "can be generous, I know: be so to a feeble woman "in your power." His answer, and I shudder at the recollection of the horror I felt when he uttered it with a countenance in which was mixed savageness and derision, was: "Artful woman! remember "your sigh in the chamber. I care for no tragedy. "You have made a comedy of me. My shame will "will be the standing farce of the age; but do not "think I mean to encounter it. When I am revenged, I may forgive you for your beauty's sake, "and time will sooth your losses; but I have not a "moment to lose: hear me, and submit for the present." I now changed my tone: "Fool!" said I, "I am not afraid of you. Whither can you take "me, that I shall not be able to gain assistance? "Think of the consequences."—"Hear me," cried he, "and you will be convinced that submission is "the sole part left for you. Revenge aiding my "other passions, determined me to carry you off. "The situation into which your rage for virtue has "thrown me, makes it impossible for me to live in "England. Your conduct has compelled me to go "abroad, and I am resolved to take you with me."

The scheme appeared so irrational and impracticable, that I could not help treating it with a smile of contempt. "You will find it wise," said he, "to change the nature of your smile, when you are "convinced that my design is not so unfeasible as "you imagine. Know that from this moment till "we arrive in France, you will be considered by all "who meet you as an insane woman, and my wife." Oh! Edward! a barbed and poisoned arrow would have been balm compared to the image raised by these words. I stared wildly at him, then flew to the door, which I found guarded by the mute. "All "struggle is fruitless, be assured," said Stanhope. "By a mistake, the chaise, and the keeper, who is "to have charge of you, and who is doubly in my "interest, are delayed an hour longer than was in-"tended. I find the man will wait at the next vil-"lage till he sees me: I must therefore go for him, "but I shall soon be back. In the meantime you "are well guarded: the person I leave is one of the "keeper's people. He has the means of confining "you, if you attempt to move. Be advised to yield "to irresistible fate. The keeper is prepared to "hear you call yourself Mrs. Percival, and he brings "the instruments of his profession with him." With such a complication of determined villany laid before me, is it not extraordinary, my dear Edward, that my courage did not fail me? The wretch excited horror as he spoke; but when he left me, and went off in the chaise that had brought me, I felt no tremour: I addressed a prayer to my Maker with confidence, and resolved, as soon as Stanhope should be out of hearing, to make an effort of persuasion or of strength with the man whom he had left to guard me.

I sat for some time with my head leaning on my hand. Gracious Providence! how inscrutable thy

ways, how unforeseen thy interference! My mute had come into the room where I was, and observing no disposition in me to be refractory, leaned over a window that looked towards the country. A minute or two of dreadful silence passed in this position, when, great God! I beheld at my feet—Triton: Stanley's dog Triton. I could almost have doubted my senses. He crouched and placed his nose on my foot. The mute turned round on his coming in, and ejaculating a *hey!* went to see if any body was with the dog. From my knowledge of Triton's sagacity, a thought instantly occurred to me of informing his master through him of my situation. I took a card from my pocket book, and with my pencil wrote these words: "Hasten to my assist-"ance, I beseech you; I am in imminent danger." To this short sentence I signed my name, and putting the card between Triton's teeth, I patted him, and cried, "Go find your master, Triton." The dog instinctively bounded out of the room, brushing by the mute as he was returning to the door. I plainly saw the hand of Providence, and my confidence increased. I rose to look out, but my mute stamped, and pointed to the chair. I was certain Triton's master could not be far off, and I resumed my patience. But, oh! it nearly forsook me when a distant sound of the wheels of a carriage reached my ear. Never let innocence despair. Imagine, my Edward, and you will imagine the truth, that you see the deliverer of Caroline enter the room where I was sitting. I fell on my knees, and from the bottom of my heart I thanked my God.

The brave youth came forward with a firm step, but kept his hands behind him. "Who the devil "are you?" cried the disguised accomplice, whose voice I have certainly heard before, but do not recollect. "Who are you, Sir?" said MY deliverer.

"I'll shoot you, by G—d!" said the other, and went to the door for the pistols he had left in the holsters. They, however, had been secured by my guardian angel, who now presented one at the fellow. "Choused, by the Lord!" exclaimed he, and darted away, crying, "Every one for himself, so "*sure* is the word."—"Stop, Sir!" said the noble George Stanley—I shall always love the name—and he would have fired at the scoundrel, had I not begged him to reserve his power for the villain I expected, who was now at hand, but forsaken by his dastardly accomplice, who, taking advantage of my request, leaped upon his horse, and galloped off at full speed.

The chaise was now driving up, and I distinctly heard Stanhope call out to the cowardly fugitive: "What's the matter? stop, I say." I embraced the gallant Stanley, while I trembled with mingled fear and admiration. "This is the villain," said I, "who is coming—Stanhope, whom you saw at the "Elms." He replied: "Do not be terrified, I "entreat you; be assured that you shall go safe "hence, or I be carried lifeless from the spot." As he spoke the daring monster entered. "I shoot "you dead if you approach," cried Stanley. The madman rushed on; his opponent fired, advancing at the same moment; and I saw Stanhope fall. My defender pressed me out of the house. Conceive my situation; but God supported me. At the door stood Triton, baying a man at whom Stanley presented the other pistol, saying, "Seize that villain "on the floor, who I am sorry to find is not dead, or "I blow your brains out, you see I am determined." Stanhope was now rising—"Seize him this in-"stant," repeated Stanley, "and bring him out, "or you are gone." The terrified keeper, who had accompanied the villain, hastened to lay hold of

the bleeding culprit as he attempted to rise, and having pinioned him before he got upon his legs, dragged him to the outer door. "Are you in the "chaise, Madam?" said Stanley to me, while he kept his eye and the pistol directed at the keeper. I got in trembling, endeavouring, at the same time, to encourage the postboy, who was also frightened at what was passing, which occupied but very few minutes. On being told I was in, Stanley retreated backward to the chaise, declaring to the man that he would put him to death if he let Stanhope go before it was out of sight. He then jumped in, pulled the door to, placed his pistol out of the window, and ordered the boy to drive fast to the nearest post-town. Stanhope's back was to us, and he was still in the keeper's arms when we turned round the hedge that concealed the house.

I again pressed the hand of my deliverer, who thanked God for making him the instrument of my preservation, and who said every thing to calm the agitation which I began to feel the more the less occasion I had for the exertion of courage. Perceiving that I trembled excessively, and fearing that I should not be able to bear the journey in that state even for a few miles more, Stanley made no ceremony of carrying me to the first house on the way, and seeing a gentleman's seat on a hill not very distant from the road, he ordered the post-boy to drive up to it. I begged him to ask first whereabouts we were. The driver said we were three miles and a half from Thame, and that the house on the hill was Mr. Beach's. The sound of land to a mariner, after a long and perilous voyage, could not be sweeter to his ear than the name of Beach to mine. I told Stanley we were well acquainted with the family, and desired that the boy would go immediately to the house. I behaved myself so well

as to reach the hospitable mansion without fainting, and the attentions paid to me by Mrs. and Miss Beach soon completely restored me to myself. I related the infamous transaction as briefly as I could, which excited the utmost indignation in all that heard it; and Mr. Beach and Stanley, attended by servants armed, set out to secure the villain, leaving me under the kind protection of Mrs. Beach.

The circumstances that attended his being apprehended I shall resign to the pen of our friend Towers, to whom I have read this letter, and who intended to have written the whole account of these events to Lord Digby; but having been much engaged on the occasion, he requests you to read this, and also the letter he is now writing to you, to his Lordship, and to apologize to him for his not writing by this opportunity. I shall only add, that Stanhope being taken into custody, the two gentlemen immediately returned to us. Mrs. Beach at first wished to detain me for the day, and to send a messenger to the Elms, but knowing what anxiety it would cause there, I resisted her friendly proposal, at the same time begging the company of Miss Beach, which was readily granted. "My protector," said I, looking at Stanley, "will escort us to the Elms." "I was in my way thither," said he. How wonderful! Edward: but I will not encroach on the part I have left for Towers.

We got into the post-chaise that was to have carried me off, and though we were three, I begged for Triton's company also. This he seemed to refuse himself, by bounding and running off before us. In less than two hours we were at our own door. The danger I had been in never entered the heads of the party, for I had more than once been as long absent at Mrs. Dyer's; but you will easily guess their surprise on seeing me and another

lady handed out of a post-chaise by Stanley. I flew into my mother's arms, and bathed her neck with my tears, which alarmed her and distressed our friends. It was some time before I could explain the cause of my emotion, and Stanley, meaning to leave the account to me, only said that I had happily escaped from the hands of a villain. The party could hardly have patience to hear my story, and I never saw my father so enraged before. Our dear Caroline thanked her deliverer for my preservation with as much grace as she had formerly thanked him for her own. I was congratulated by the whole party, and Madame de St. Valeri, after looking fixedly at me for some time, came across the room and kissed me. My father and mother hugged Stanley; the former being assured that the son of Beelzebub, as he called Stanhope, was secured, became pacified, and we sat down to dinner as happy as the recurring reflections of your absence and Charles's situation would admit. Heaven bless you, my Edward, and restore him!

As to the circumstances of which I have informed you, I have no doubt that you will command your anger, and act with the magnanimity that distinguishes you on every occasion; but I fear it may make you anxious to fly to me, therefore keep in mind that I am safe at home, with an additional protector in the brave Stanley, and curtail no comfort that your presence may bestow on your brother. Once more adieu!

JULIA.

LETTER LXXXV.

PHILIP TOWERS TO PERCIVAL.

Who George Stanley proves to be—The sequel of the villany —The history of Henry Tankerville.

My dear Edward,

I CORDIALLY congratulate you on the providential escape of Julia, who, let me assure you, looks as well as ever she did in her life, and waits but your return and Charles's recovery to be the happiest of women. As I knew she would write to you very fully on the late occurrence, it was my intention to address myself to Lord Digby, but she has requested me to relate the sequel of her alarming adventure to you, leaving you to communicate our letters to his Lordship.

My astonishment was more than I can express to you when I saw Stanley handing Julia out of the chaise, and rose to the summit of wonder and admiration when I heard the part he had had in her preservation. It appeared to me like a magical romance, where every dilemma is at the direction of preternatural power, and no attention paid to the *Nec Deus intersit.* I will allow it was *dignus vindice nodus;* but as the Providence of Christians generally acts by natural and probable means, I am now to show you, Edward, that although his interposition in this point is clearer than all we read of among the heathens, it appears nothing more than a chain of natural consequences, of which, however, the first link originated with the villain Stanhope himself. The following question was obviously one of the first to be put to Stanley: "How was it, that "you were near the spot where this villany was go-

" ing on?"—" There is nothing wonderful in it," replied he; " for the probability was that I should " be near, having received so pressing a request " from Mr. Percival to come to the Elms about this " time."—" A request from Percival?"—" There " it is," said he, producing the letter which you wrote in town in answer to the exciseman's heir. " Heavens!" said Julia, " how came you by " that letter?"—" It was delivered to me by Stan- " hope's servant, whom I had seen at the Elms, " and who assured me it was for me."—" Did you " read the direction?" said she. " I did," he replied, " and as the servant told me the letter was " from Mr. Percival, I did not doubt it was for me: " but I saw a mistake had crept into the family at " the Elms, which was an additional inducement for " me to comply with Mr. Percival's request; for I " own the recollection of some very delicate inci- " dents hurt my pride a little; and, although when " I meant to hide myself I whimsically assumed " the name of George Stanley, I could not bear the " thought of passing in this house for my father's " footman."—" Your father's!" cried Julia. " Yes! " Madam," replied he, " my father's—General " Tankerville's—I am that unfortunate, deserted, " young man, Henry Tankerville."

My dear Percival, you must let your imagination paint to you our faces; for I cannot pretend to describe the effect this avowal had upon us, though you will probably divine whose emotions were the most lively. Caroline prudently averted her countenance. " How could you," said Julia, " keep us " so long in the dark?"—" Because, my dear Ma- " dam," replied he, " the light was painful. It is " painful still, and I beseech you to let the subject " drop, for the present.—Upon receiving Mr. Perci- " val's note, which I did in London the very day

" after he left it, I determined upon a visit to the " Elms, as soon as a course of lectures which I was " attending should be over. I came as far as Wick- " ham with a friend with whom I have studied, and " there spent a day with him. I was walking a " stage this morning through choice, having re- " quested my friend to forward my trunk, which will " be here to-morrow. Triton, my faithful compa- " nion, walked with me, and we never make it a " point to keep the road. I was passing over the " field next to that in which the empty house stands. " Triton is a rover, and the sight of a horse at the " door allured him. I was looking through a hedge, " and waiting for him, when seeing him returning, " I continued my way in the other field, till he " overtook me, and to my amazement laid your card " at my feet. I had seen the man come to the door, " I therefore ran with all my speed, and as I ap- " proached the house, the holsters upon the horse " fortunately caught my eye: warned by your short " note of some mischief, I hastened to secure the " pistols they contained, and I bless God for the ad- " vantage I derived from them."

It is evident, my dear Edward, that Stanhope knew Tankerville was in town, but by what motive he was induced to conceal it, or to cause your letter to be delivered to him, it is not easy to say, unless it be that pure malignity of spirit that finds its chief joy in evil. I have no doubt his intention was to mortify Tankerville. But, let us observe, this man's vice was the very means of his detection and ruin. Had his servant not taken charge of the letter, or had he, as you intended, put it into the post, the unconscious Tankerville would have been pursuing modes of satisfying his thirst for knowledge, and the demon Stanhope would have remained unassailed by such an antagonist. How nobly he behaved you

have heard from Julia herself; the sequel chiefly relates to the villain whom he discomfited.

When Mr. Beach and Tankerville went to secure him, they found him at a cottage in a lane, about a mile beyond that which turns up to the empty house, whither, however, they first repaired, and meeting with some boys led by curiosity to look at the blood that had been spilled, they were directed to the place of his retreat. He was under the hands of a surgeon, who had tied a bandage round his head, so that only his eyes and forehead could be seen. "With those," said Tankerville, "he looked de-"fiance, and clenched his fist on observing me." But he soon saw that defiance was in vain. Mr. Beach, who fortunately happened to be a magistrate, immediately committed him on the deposition of Tankerville, who, before the scoundrel, told the Justice that he was the General's son. Not being able to procure bail, he was conveyed to the county jail, whence, I understand, he wrote to Sir Richard Brainless, but without effect, and also as fruitlessly to Colonel Sullivan, his maternal uncle, who, to his honour, on hearing the nature of his offence, not only declared that he would not himself become his bail, but that he should have a bad opinion of any one who did; so that the wretch lies in prison to take his trial at the next assizes.

Before he was committed, Mr. Beach enquired into the nature of his wound, and was informed by the surgeon that it was by no means dangerous, though a very awkward one. The ball had torn off the gristle of the nose, and laid open the fleshy part of the cheek. He said that it had completely disfigured him for life; but that with a little care he would soon recover in other respects. It appeared he had not fallen in consequence alone of the ball's touching him, but that Tankerville had tripped him

up at the moment he fired. One of the ladies asking what would be his punishment: "He will be "hanged, no doubt," cried Tankerville, eagerly. "God forbid!" said Julia: "may he live and re-"pent!"—"Since I have heard the nature of his "wound," said Bevil, "I am not sorry that the law "does not condemn him to death: but had he "escaped unhurt, is imprisonment, even the long "imprisonment of two years, an adequate punish-"ment for such a crime? Is not that for which Jo-"seph Radley was executed, is not robbery a feat "of heroism in comparison?"—"Will he not be "hanged then?" said Tankerville. "I was going to "say," added he, "that I was sorry the pistol had "done no better execution: but no, I am not; for "though I could certainly reconcile it to my feel-"ings in such a case to deprive a villain of life, it "is much more agreeable to them that he remains "in the hands of Providence."

Bevil and I went over to the county jail, and have been riding about for the purpose of collecting information on this atrocious business. We find that on the morning Stanhope left the Elms he went to Lord Chopstone's seat, where he remained some days, and was joined by Sir Richard Brainless, with whom he set off for London. The person who came in the chaise with him, when Tankerville treated him so roughly, was really a keeper of insane people, a man known and very well spoken of, who informed us that he attended Stanhope at the desire of Dr. Wheeler; but that he began to have suspicions before he saw the lady, that there was some villany at the bottom, from the large present he had received from the gentleman, who gave him fifty pounds, saying that he did not value money, and that he meant to give him twice as much more when *his wife* was safely placed in the house he had chosen

for her on the continent. He concluded, by protesting that he had intended, if he found his suspicion true, to give information of it to the doctor, and said that if the young gentleman who shot him would have allowed him time to speak, he would have found him a very willing assistant. He then told us that when Tankerville and Julia left the place, Stanhope was at first in a rage, and damned him for not assisting him, though at the risk of his life, but the wound he had received bleeding a good deal, soon brought him to reflection, and binding his handkerchief round his face, he went with him to the cottage, and then sent the surgeon to him. With respect to the accomplice, who performed the part of the mute, we have not yet detected him, but we have strong suspicions that it was his friend Brainless; and Julia now thinks it was his voice; but as Stanhope's footman is not to be found, he shares the suspicion: nor does the conduct of Lord Chopstone escape animadversion, for he not only received the villain, but has not since been at the Elms; and when Bevil and I called on him, he was denied. I have little doubt but that this democratic Lord, and the shallow-pated Baronet, will prove to have been at least confidents on the occasion, and if so, nothing shall be omitted to expose them. Meanwhile do not be uneasy, or in haste to return: you have time enough to consider what steps to take, and whether it will be advisable or not to institute a civil action against the wretched creature who has given you grounds for one.

Let us forget him at present, to gratify ourselves with contemplating a different being; the noble Tankerville. I have recovered his friendship; he has at length fully admitted me into his confidence, and the more I know of him, the more I esteem and love him. He has a chamber at the Elms, and has pro-

mised to stay till you come back. One of the first things he did, was to go and see the Cowpers, of whom he spoke in high terms. He paid this visit while Bevil and I were absent. On our return from making the enquiries I have mentioned to you, I contrived an early opportunity of conversing with him alone; and I led to the acquisition of his confidence by offering mine, and by assuring him that I was so interested in his fate, that there was no misfortune that should prevent me from adhering to him through life, if he would bestow his friendship upon me. I hinted that I had been mortified at my failure in my former endeavour, when I heard he had left Cowper's farm without answering my letter, and that his abrupt separation with poor Lord Powic wore the appearance of a mystery, which, after what I had said, I would venture to beg him to explain. "Mr. Towers," said he, "I am sensible "of the value of the offer you make me of your "friendship, and I will no longer be mad enough "to slight the blessing heaven has thrown in my "way: but," continued he, taking my hand and pressing it, "in accounting, my friend, for my con- "duct to you and to Lord Powic, I must renew "griefs which I carefully avoid, lest they should "drive me to madness, and to banish which from "my mind has increased my ardour for studies, "that, had I been happier, would, perhaps, have "been neglected for transient and worthless plea- "sures. I will now tell you my story, and hence- "forth you shall be my friend and counsellor."

Seeing that he was agitated as he spoke, I said, if he found it too painful to proceed, I would hear it another time. "No," replied he, "the comfort of "your friendship already relieves my mind of half "its burden. You know General Tankerville?" I said I did, but that my knowledge of him was very

slight. "He has the manners of a gentleman," continued he, "yet he is not on sociable terms with the "world. Although I am his only child I do not re- "member ever to have received a smile from him in "my life, or to have seen him look at my poor mother "without a frown. My mother, Towers, is the most "amiable, the most pious, the most virtuous of wo- "men. She is the daughter of a private gentleman, "of very small fortune, who has a house in the "neighbourhood of Derby, where he still lives, but "is very old and infirm; his name is Davenport. "He had several children, but lost them all in their "infancy except two daughters, one married to a "clergyman with a small benefice, and my mother, "whom by an unaccountable perverseness he united "to a man of a dissimilar disposition, who has ren- "dered her completely miserable ever since they "were married.

"From the earliest period of my remembrance I "cannot trace one instance of paternal fondness from "my father; yet I have never been deterred by "neglect or harshness from courting it from the "moment I could prattle, to the hour he turned me "from his door. Great God! how have I deserved, "in the twenty years I have existed on this globe, "to lose my right to one of the sweetest gifts be- "stowed by nature on every living creature on its "entrance upon its being? why was my father alone "to be a stranger to the feelings of a parent! yet in "the earlier part of my life he seems to have been "ashamed of his unnatural apathy, or rather abhor- "rence, for though he spurned me from him in "private, he endured me in the presence of others. "I will say for him that his harshness never trans- "ported him to the length of personal cruelty; but "oh! I could have embraced the most brutal effects "of anger as a blessing, had they been but succeeded

" by the caresses of nature: his hatred was marked " by looks and not by blows, by neglect and not by " tyranny.

" As his son, I had a right to a liberal education, " but of that he made no account. My mother im- " proved my mind in my younger years, and no one " was abler to do it; but he was so jealous of her " fondness for me;—she loved me, Towers, in double " proportion as she was sensible of his deficiency of " affection: I shall never forget the delicious sen- " sations I felt in her caresses, when I became old " enough to be affected by the contrast;—but of her " fondness he was so jealous, that he took me from " her tuition when I was about nine years old, and " sent me to my grandfather, desiring him to put me " to a school in Derby. My mother, far from being " averse to this, thanked him for it, and I was ac- " cordingly consigned to the care of a schoolmaster, " under whom, with fifty other boys, I was to pick " up what learning could come to my share, which " consisted of a variety of Latin and Greek words " and verses, with very few ideas annexed to them; " but of the nature of things and of reasoning I was " left to acquire spontaneous knowledge, and to owe " my progress to fortuitous information.

" My mother was extremely anxious for my im- " provement in general, but not doubting that any " mental instruction could be wanting at a school, " she more strenuously pressed my grandfather to at- " tend to my being provided with instructors, in all " personal accomplishments. While General Tanker- " ville supposed I was plodding unprofitably through " a routine of classes, I was taught to fence and to " dance, to draw and to play the bass; I was drilled " by a soldier, and exercised on horseback by a " huntsman; so that, when the time came for my " leaving school, I was tolerably proficient in these

" qualifications, while I remained utterly ignorant " of the nobler knowledge for which the understand- " ing craves.

" I sometimes, but not often, saw my mother at " the house of her father, with whom the General " lived on terms of friendship, and in the vacations " she was permitted to take me home. During " these visits, as I grew older I grew more observant, " and the wretched state of my parents became " obvious to me. My father never used visible " cruelty to my mother—his character, as I have " told you, is not that of brutality; a determined " gloom hung upon his countenance; he did not re- " fuse her his conversation, but it was bestowed " rather as a ceremony than enjoyed as a pleasure; " no endearing term escaped from his lips; Madam " was his usual address to her, and he early began " to call me Sir; nor could he bear that I should " call him father, and therefore habituated me to " address him by the title of General Tankerville.

" There was little company visited at the house, " and those who did come to it were chiefly induced " by the rules of form. The ardent affection I felt " for my mother helped me to endure, but could " not conceal from me, the horror of such a life. I " was delighted with my situation at Derby; yet " the fondness for my mother which increased with " my years always made me look with anxious desire " for the period I was to spend with her. I re- " member a most affecting scene that passed between " us when I was about fourteen. She took every " opportunity to impress religious principles on my " mind: one day she was inculcating a dependence " on Providence, when I said to her that I could " not understand how it was that she who was so " good should be so unhappy: to this she made me " the general and just reply; that the infinite oper -

" ations of Providence were not confined to so " limited a term as life, though they often produced " their effects even in this short stage of existence; " that sorrows were not always to be reckoned mis- " fortunes; and that in many cases no human being " but the sufferer could tell how much the suffering " was merited. ' You, my mother,' said I, ' do not " deserve to be so unhappy as you are.' The tears " started to her eyes; she pressed me to her bosom, " and replied; ' My dear Henry, that is more than " you can say; the truth is, I do deserve it.' Her " tears now flowed down her cheeks—what is more " contagious to a young and tender mind than the " tears of a beloved parent? mine gushed from their " sources in my heart; I threw my arms around her " neck; we wept on each other, and I said; ' No, " no, I am sure you do not deserve it.'

" On recovering herself, she kissed me, and taking " my hand, said, ' My dear boy, you are now old " enough to understand me, and your sensibility and " affection merit my confidence. Be assured then " that General Tankerville is not so much to blame " as you and the world suppose him. I committed " a crime in marrying him, for I did not love him; " I acted from compulsion; the happiness of my " father depended upon my compliance with his " wishes; he was at once the fondest and the sternest " of parents; and his sweetest blessings or direst " curses awaited my determination. Nothing on " earth ought to have prevented me from telling Ge- " neral Tankerville that he was indifferent to my heart. " I obeyed the prohibition of declaring it, which, from " his knowledge of my reluctance, my father had " enjoined; I obeyed it indeed literally, by not ex- " pressing in words the state of my heart, yet had " he not been blinded by his passion, the General " might have seen that he was leading to the altar a

" victim rather than a bride. He had been early
" promoted in the army; and held the rank of lieu-
" tenant-colonel, when, on the death of his father,
" he came into Derbyshire to take possession of his
" estate. Our families had been long acquainted,
" and in a visit he paid your grandfather, I had the
" misfortune to attract his regard. When he first
" told me he loved me, I besought him to relinquish
" his passion: this he considered but as the usual
" coyness of women, and he solicited my father's in-
" fluence with me.—I have already,' continued she,
" 'told you the motives that induced me to marry him.
" The ceremony had not been performed two months
" when he was ordered with his regiment to America,
" where the troubles had broken out into a civil
" war. He was absent near two years, when he re-
" turned in consequence of a wound. He observed
" that my reception of him was dictated more by
" duty than by fondness; you were then beginning
" to run about, and from the moment I presented
" you to him to this instant, he has never looked
" upon either of us with the slightest degree of
" affection. I have in vain made every effort to
" sooth him, and our lives have been ever since
" what you see it now—marked distrust and abhor-
" rence on his part, and on mine submission to his
" will, and resignation to the chastisement of Pro-
" vidence.'

" Such, dear Towers," continued young Tanker-
ville, " was the confession of a mother to a son. On
" hearing it, I was reasonable enough at the time to
" make allowances for my father's conduct, while I
" loved and pitied my mother; but I thought it, and
" still think it, unaccountable, that the natural feel-
" ings of a parent were never awakened in his breast.
" I left nothing unattempted to win his affection and
" conciliate his good opinion; but if I had any suc-

" cess in the latter, it certainly never led to the " former.

" When I grew too big to be left at school, he " consented, on the representation of my grand- " father, that I should be taken away; but he would " never listen to the necessity urged by my mother, " of sending me to one of the universities. He " proposed the army to me, to which, notwithstand- " ing my mother's objections, I felt a great inclina- " tion at first; and had he followed his proposal " with the purchase of a commission, I should have " been highly gratified; for the Commentaries of " Cæsar had inspired me with martial ideas, and the " life of Charles XII. which I had read at home, " had so exalted my notions of a daring spirit, that " I longed for the glory of repelling a large army " with a handful of men, and of being set on fire " before I yielded to them. The General, however, " procrastinated his intention from time to time; " and at the end of two years after I left school, I " found myself still dragging the painful life I have " described to you, passing my days sometimes at " my grandfather's, and sometimes at home, some- " times in exercise, sometimes reading the poets, " and catching new ideas at random.

" Last year the superannuated curate of the village " near which General Tankerville lives died, and a " gentleman of the name of Wollaston was appoint- " ed to the curacy, who had a prospect of prefer- " ment, on the event of which he was to be married. " He is an amiable young man, and I formed an " intimacy with him. I shall always esteem it one " of the happiest circumstances of my life; he " possesses great learning, is of a domestic turn, and " is fond of study. I soon imbibed his taste; it " gave him pleasure; and he took a world of kind " pains to supply the defects of my education, of

" which I became the more sensible the more I con-
" versed with him. We got together globes, tele-
" scopes, and mathematical instruments; we read
" over a treatise of logic, and I was eagerly devour-
" ing the very food I had craved for, when I was
" suddenly snatched away from it by an impenetrable
" determination of General Tankerville's.

" One morning after breakfast, he sent for me to
" his own room. I immediately obeyed the summons.
" Triton, who had for more than a year before been
" my constant companion, rose from my mother's
" feet where he had been lying, and followed me.
" The General was still taking his chocolate, for he
" never breakfasted with us: on my entering, he
" told me he had something to say to me, and bade
" me take a chair. This was very unusual; and
" although the tone of his voice was rather softer
" than I had ever heard it before, and his counte-
" nance composed, I felt dismayed, and as if some
" horrid sentence was going to be passed upon me.
" 'Henry,' said he, 'I am not a brute nor insensible.'
" The manner in which he pronounced this, agitated
" me extremely. 'God forbid you should think,
" Sir,' cried I, 'that I have such ideas.'—'Hear
" me without interruption,' said he.—'Esteem may
" be forced though love cannot; I should be a brute
" and insensible could I refuse you the former; but
" at the same time, however unnatural you may sup-
" pose it, it is evident I cannot yield you the latter.'
" This, Towers, was a shocking avowal from a father
" to a son; it made my heart swell, but I endeavoured
" to suppress the tears that were ready to flow.
" 'The life you lead in my house,' continued he,
" 'can neither be agreeable to you nor to me. I
" have reasons for altering my first plan of putting
" you into the army, but I confess I am at a loss
" how to dispose of you otherwise, and I am come

" to a resolution to provide for you at once: you
" are young, but you are prudent, and run no risk in
" being trusted to your own guidance. This,' con-
" tinued he, taking up a folded skin of parchment
" that lay upon his table, ' is a deed by which I have
" settled three hundred a year upon you for life,
" and this pocket-book contains bank-notes to the
" amount of five hundred pounds. With this I wish
" you to pursue any plan of your own choosing,
" except that of the army, and all I request of you
" is, not to reside within the distance of two counties
" from Derbyshire.'

" I could restrain my tears no longer; and while
" they flowed in abundance I fell at his knees, and
" begged to know what I had done that he should
" discard me. He coolly answered, ' I do not dis-
" card you, nor do I wish to prevent your visiting
" your mother occasionally; but, without holding
" myself accountable to you for it, I tell you your
" absence is necessary to my peace.'—' Good God!'
" I exclaimed. ' Cease your exclamation,' said he;
" ' you will find it the wisest plan for both of us.'—
" ' Have mercy, Sir,' cried I; ' this will break my
" mother's heart.'—' I mean no cruelty to her or to
" you,' replied he; ' the indulgence of your emo-
" tions may make it cruel; that will be your fault:
" but part with the intention of revisiting, and you
" will render the task easy to both; your stay, Sir,
" will be a cruelty to me.' So cool, and seemingly
" digested a dismission, wounded me to the soul,
" and a poniard in my heart would have been less
" painful. ' Do you mean to disown me, Sir?' said
" I.—' I will answer your question,' replied he,
" ' but let the subject end there. Henry, I wish
" you well, and do not mean to disown you; but let
" me see you as seldom as possible.'—Saying this,
" he rose and left the room.

"Judge, my dear friend, of my feelings when I "saw him shut the door. There never was surely "any thing like this conduct in nature. He allowed "me merit, he wished me well, and yet he turned "me from his house. Has Nature then dissolved "her engagements only with me? By attributing "prudence to me, did he mean to scoff at wisdom "in a boy? alas! I owed that prudence to him, "whose conduct early brought me to reflection. I "must not omit to tell you, that as he went from "me, the dog, lying by my chair, gave a continued "howl till he reached the door. I am persuaded, "Mr. Towers, that there is a secret sympathy be-"tween the canine race and human creatures. "General Tankerville stopped at the door, and "pointing to Triton, said, 'I give you the dog; and "let it convince you, that while I feel the step I have "taken necessary, it does not proceed from an emo-"tion of anger.'

"Three hundred a-year during a father's life, "and a pocket-book with five hundred pounds in it, "would probably have been no cause of tears or "despair to most young men in their twentieth "year; but my mother's instructions and my father's "behaviour had taught me to reflect much sooner "than others of my age. I was conscious that the "son of General Tankerville had other claims and "rights besides that of a support, and the pleasure "of being my own master was no recompence for "the want of a father's affection, or the deprivation "of a mother's fondness. My submission therefore "was the result of necessity.

"I continued for some time in the General's "room, crying like a child. I then turned my "thoughts to the part I was to take. I found no "difficulty in relinquishing the army. The ideas I "had acquired in the course of my friendship with

" the worthy Wollaston had dispelled the gaudy
" haloes of a conqueror: Cæsar's tactics were ab-
" sorbed in the question of what business had he in
" Gaul? and Charles's exemption from fear was
" converted into a vicious departure from nature
" by the absurdity of his actions. In the course of
" three years, I had learned to confine all military
" glory to the defence of my king and country; and
" while I felt that my heart would lead me into the
" front of the battle for the House of Brunswick and
" the constitution of Great Britain, I was by no
" means solicitous to pursue military honours pro-
" fessionally. But deserted as I was, what was I
" to do?

" After many unhappy reflections I was roused
" from a reverie, into which I had fallen, by the
" entrance of my mother. She came in smiling;
" the smiles of that dear woman were ever a cordial
" to me, and so are the recollection of them.
" ' Henry,' said she, ' the General is gone out on
" horseback, why did not you return to me; you
" knew I should be anxious: what is the matter?'
" ' Oh! my dear mother,' cried I, ' we are indeed
" unhappy; but keep your spirits up, and be assured
" that while I live I will be a son to you.'—' Tell
" me,' said she, eagerly, ' what has passed between
" General Tankerville and you.' I made no hesita-
" tion in relating to her precisely the particulars of
" the interview that had taken place. She listened
" with great attention, and remained silent for some
" minutes after I had done speaking; then looking
" at me with all the tenderness of a fond mother,
" she said; ' Henry, I am not sorry for it; follow
" the advice you have just given me; keep up your
" spirits, and, let me add, depend on Providence;
" deserve his protection, and leave it to Him to de-
" termine the time of your reward. My child,' con-

" tinued she, 'I see a great deal of comfort and ad-
" vantage for you in this arrangement: have pati-
" ence, and if I have any discernment, your reward
" will not be long delayed. Meantime, go to your
" friend Wollaston, consult with him how to proceed
" in the improvement of your mind, conduct your-
" self accordingly, and our lives will yet be happy.'

" Encouraged by this firmness in my mother, from
" whom I apprehended tears and despondence, I
" revived, and began to consider the event in the
" light she did, as propitious to the improvement of
" my mind. After some affectionate conversation,
" in which we settled the time of my returning to
" visit her, and in which it was determined that I
" should not communicate the circumstance to my
" grandfather, who was now old, feeble, and dropping
" into the grave, I resolved upon an immediate de-
" parture, without seeing the General again. I
" took the deed and the pocket-book; I desired my
" mother to send my clothes and books to Wollas-
" ton's, and after kissing her a hundred times,
" mingling my tears with hers, I tore myself from
" her and hastened to the village.

" Dear Wollaston! how surprised and how affected
" was he by the tale I told him! he pressed me to
" his bosom, and we vowed an eternal friendship.
" 'Henry,' said he, 'be assured it is all right; you
" are in the hands of Providence, and this event,
" disastrous and gloomy as it appears to you, is a
" grand step towards your welfare both temporal
" and eternal. I know you value your mind more
" than your rank. You shall go to Oxford; I will
" give you a letter to a gentleman who will be of
" use to you, and you shall follow the bent of your
" inclination for study.' Thus comforted, I regained
" my spirits; and Wollaston, rightly judging that
" the neighbourhood of General Tankerville was

" not a place likely to support them, far from press-
" ing me to stay any time with him, advised my set-
" ting out without delay.

" The delightful season of the year excited in
" me a desire to travel into some of the adjacent
" counties previous to my going to Oxford; and my
" friend proposing to accompany me some of the
" way, we took a few changes of linen, set out in his
" chaise attended by Triton, and visited Stafford,
" Litchfield, and Shrewsbury, where we parted, his
" duty not permitting him to be longer absent. I de-
" termined to travel as I found it convenient, or as it
" suited my fancy, and he undertook to send my things
" after me by some public conveyance. Loitering
" a day or two at Shrewsbury after Wollaston left
" me, I accidentally met a young man whose name
" is George Stanley, who had been lately in the
" General's service; and finding the name of Tanker-
" ville oppressive to my recollection, I took it into
" my head, without dreaming of the possibility of
" my ever being mistaken for the General's foot-
" man, to change it a while for his.

" Thus Triton and I travelled by various modes
" through several counties, and met with many little
" adventures, one of which was falling in with my
" friend farmer Cowper, after descending the Malvern
" hills on foot into the extensive vale of Worcester-
" shire. I helped him to do something to the
" harness of his chaise, and in return, finding
" me tired of walking, he conveyed me and
" Triton on to Worcester. There we parted to
" meet again, as you already know; and I need not
" add that our meeting has given rise to some of the
" happiest reflections that can gild the memory of
" man. I hope, Mr. Towers," continued Tankerville,
" that I have not tired you with this long narrative,
" but it was necessary to enable me to account for

" the strangeness of my departure from this neigh-
" bourhood, which it now remains for me to do.
" So far as it respects Lord Powic, it will be an
" easy task; but greatly otherwise as it respects you
" and your friends here.

" Lord Powic's attentions to me were very be-
" witching, and I should not have left Powic-castle
" so soon, but for an incident which I apprehended
" my continuance might convert into a serious di-
" lemma. My Lord one day unexpectedly came
" in upon me when I was looking at my mother's
" picture, which I have worn for years. I showed
" it to him at his request, and by what he said, found
" that he knew nothing of my family; but unfortu-
" nately he gave me to understand that his nephew
" had spoken disrespectfully of my mother. I be-
" lieve I lost my temper, which, however, the good
" old Lord, in a very amiable manner, gave me an
" opportunity of recovering; yet, from my emotions,
" I felt it was not safe for me to meet Lord Chop-
" stone, and I determined therefore not only to leave
" Lord Powic's, but the country; though, in reality,
" this was only the execution of a prior determina-
" tion. I had resolved—how can I tell it you?—
" to resign altogether the happiness of my acquaint-
" ance at the Elms; to forget that I had ever met
" Cowper; to forget, if possible, all that had hap-
" pened to me in consequence. I ought to have
" proceeded with better manners, I confess: it is un-
" pardonable in me not to have answered your letter;
" it is unpardonable not to have written my acknow-
" ledgments to the good old Earl. Forgive me; I
" was unhappy, and I acted without consideration."

I need not tell you, my dear Percival, that I was extremely affected by this narrative, or that it added new grounds for the esteem and affection already gained by the noble champion of our Julia and Caroline. I thanked him warmly for his friendship,

and the confidence he had reposed in me, which I requested and engaged for you and the bosom friends of the Elms and of Bevil-lodge; and then I asked him what could have induced him to think of giving us up. "This," said he, "as I told you, is "the most difficult to explain, and you shall excuse "me for the present: I will hereafter." He coloured, and taking my hand, added, "Will you think "it no breach of our friendship to postpone an ex-"planation which I cannot now give, even to you, "with any degree of propriety?" I pressed his hand and said, I would wait his own time: I said it too without smiling, that I might not give him the pain of imagining that I penetrated into his motives, which he did not observe, so unobservant are lovers, that, if I did not guess them before, his reserve, after so full a communication in other respects, would probably betray. I can have no doubt, Percival, that his rough and abrupt attempt to blot us all out of his memory arose from a resolution to conquer the passion that had been kindled by Caroline; and it is natural to suspect that she was the chief person whom he was solicitous to undeceive as to his rank in life. We must drive this charming boy and girl into each other's arms, Edward; but of that when we meet.

General Tankerville's conduct is the most inhuman, determined, and unaccountable I ever heard of. Why behave thus to a child, because he married a woman whose affections he could not gain? and whose virtue, I would stake my life, on her son's account, has never been sullied by her actions. I long to have you at home, that we may attend to these concerns, which are now become ours. You must see the father and mother of Henry Tankerville. You are indeed called upon by the voice of gratitude; and I presage much happiness to all parties from your visit. At present, however, our anxiety for

Charles increases, and we look daily for letters from the Continent. May they be favourable! Adieu!

LETTER LXXXVI.

JOHN STANHOPE TO SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS, BART.

He first upbraids, then compounds for his assistance.

Sir Richard,

THE damnable situation in which I am, you must be sensible, is entirely owing to you. In the first place, you talked at Shrewsbury with that man George Stanley about Percival, which put it into his head to write the letter that produced the answer, and of course young Tankerville's journey into Oxfordshire. In the next place when I left you, in a lonely spot with pistols, to watch a woman, you suffered a stripling to surprise you and take away the arms; then, instead of stopping to help me when I called to you, you spurred your horse the more, as if pursued by the devil.

Brainless, I will not reproach you with idiotism or cowardice. Driven to distraction as I am, I still consider you my friend. I cannot endure existence; there can be no hell worse than what I suffer; but to die here, like a rat driven to a hole, must not be. Do not lose a moment in coming to me: the magistrates are bound to bail me, and they will do it. The sum they think proper to require is six thousand pounds myself, and two securities in three thousand pounds each. I have written to my uncle, Colonel Sullivan, and have no doubt of his coming to meet you here the moment he receives my letter.

Come immediately, my dear Sir Richard, and believe me always,

Your sincere, though unfortunate friend,

JOHN STANHOPE.

LETTER LXXXVII.

SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS TO J. STANHOPE, ESQ.

The conclusion of friendship between a fool and a knave—Sir Richard recriminates with characteristic consistency—Administers a law comfort—A nice case—A short explanatory postscript.

Mr. Stanhope,

It is a subject of much wonder to me, Sir, that you should accuse *me* of being the means of your misfortune, when you must be sensible it is owing to *your own violent passions.* In the first place, *your unwarrantable passion* for Mrs. Percival, which I always advised you against, and in the next place your impregnable *spirit of revenge,* which the whole force of my reason could not subdue, though I am sure I could have convinced any man *but you and Lord Chopstone,* who was your only abettor, that *it was illegal* for any man to carry off any man's wife, that is, *by force.*

As for my speaking at Shrewsbury to a man who had been my footman, what has *that* to do with the business? Would that have prevented a letter going *as it was directed?* You understand me. Did not *you yourself* tell me, that when Mr. Percival gave you the letter for George Stanley, you gave it to your man Thomas, and desired him *to give it to the young man* who saved Miss Percival from the bull, and Mrs. Percival from you? And didn't you say that all that would happen was, that the youth

would be mortified, and forward the letter to the owner?

And as for leaving *me* in a lonely spot: Lord! Lord! how can you have the assurance to say so? Did *I go with you* to the mad doctor to give your story credit by my appearance? Did *I engage the French smugglers* to be at Folkstone? and *was I the man with the crape on horseback?* And though that man did put spurs to his horse when you called to him to stop, wasn't he in the right when that man knew very well that there was *not only danger of life* in the firing of loaded pistols, *but danger of justices' warrants?* Why didn't Lord Chopstone consent to go instead of that man? why, because he knew there was danger of being brought before a justice, and it's *a great proof* of that man's friendship for you, that he defied *all that danger* before it happened: and I don't see any *idiotism or cowardice* in *that man;* but I see a great deal of *ingratitude* in you to a person who advanced you *five hundred pounds.*

Wishing still to do you any proper or lawful service *I consulted* my uncle Lord Dolt, and my friend Mr. Gosling, and *they advised* me to consult lawyer Deodand, and it's *the joint opinion* of the lawyer, my uncle Lord Dolt, and Mr. Gosling, that I should not *wash in troubled waters*, which could be of no service *to a culprit caught in the fact*, and might lead the Court, the world at large, and the jury in the box, to suspect *my* honour was concerned in this outrageous breach of the peace and *abductio mulieris*, which however to your comfort I tell you, on the authority of lawyer Deodand, is not a capital offence, *no hanging matter.*

I tell you this because I know you are more afraid of *the name* of a rope than all that a rope itself can do to you. And I put *that very case* to the lawyer: says I, "Mr. Deodand,"—don't let this

make you uneasy, Mr. Stanhope, for I give you my word only the lawyer and I were by at the time— "Mr. Deodand," says I, "*suppose now*, I was so "obstinate, as contrary to your advice to bail the "culprit, and before his trial comes on he should "make away with himself, should I be liable to "pay the penalty?"—"Humph!" says he, "I am "of opinion it is a doubtful case: A. undertakes "that B. shall stand trial, B. does not appear, A. "forfeits recognizance *nisi* he can show that the "reason of the non-appearance of B. was in conse- "quence of an *actus Dei:* then quære, is a man's "blowing out his brains an *actus Dei?* It seems "to me that the solution of that quære will depend "upon the verdict returned by the coroner's jury: "if that verdict be lunacy, that clearly brings it to "an *actus Dei*, and Judge will allow A.'s recog- "nizance to be cancelled. But *audi alteram par-* "*tem*," says Deodand; "if that verdict be *felo de* "*se*, how does the case stand? I cannot exactly in- "vent a mode off hand, how we should squeeze "that, either within the letter or spirit of an *actus* "*Dei*, unless perhaps we could manage to prove "that the *felo* did not load the pistol himself, for "then it came ready loaded to his hand, and who "loaded it? nobody knows; consequently it would "look so much like a providential matter, that it is "possible it might be considered as at least stand- "ing within the spirit of an *actus Dei*, and Judge "might allow A.'s recognizance to be cancelled, in "consideration of the benefit accruing to the coun- "try. But it would be a very nice case, and I can- "not pledge my reputation in advising it."

Upon the whole then, Mr. Stanhope, I am *under the necessity* of declining your request, however willing I should have been from my *former*, I say *former* good opinion of your principles before I

knew them, to step forward to relieve you from your incarceration.

I am, Sir,
Your very humble servant,
RICHARD BRAINLESS.

P. S. Don't be angry, dear Stanny, the lawyer says it is *absolutely necessary* that I should write guardedly. Your man Thomas is with me. *I'll keep him out of the way.* Don't talk of dying: apply to Lord Chopstone to bail you; *he can't refuse:* once you get abroad, you will be happy: *turn democrat,* and you won't feel *the loss of your nose.*

LETTER LXXXVIII.

LORD DIGBY TO PHILIP TOWERS.

Human nature—Percival—A brother—Nice feelings—Plan for relieving Charles—Lord Digby's conversation with him—The brothers meet.

Dear Towers, Lisle.

ALL that you have ever said to me of Percival falls short of the man. There is no affectation in him; no hypocrisy: his character is that of nature, of *human* nature, of which the essential distinctions are sentiment, virtue, and religion. Percival is as ready to act as to speak morally, and the more I become acquainted with him the more am I convinced that there is not a spark of vanity at the bottom of his zeal for the elevated principles which seem to be the link of union between man and superior natures. Yes, my friend, I relinquish my prejudices, I will no

longer associate the ideas of sentiment and hypocrisy, no longer connect moral effusions with the notion of a corrupt heart, or suffer a doubt of sincerity to follow the language of truth. Action, where there is room for action, must ever remain the test of a man's spirit, but till that contradicts his tongue, I never will again be jealous of praise bestowed on virtue.

Where is the man, say the world, that can pretend to perfection? The world should first tell us what is the perfection of man. Is it to have conquered the degrading passions? To be void of avarice, envy, revenge, and pride? To be brave, faithful, benevolent, and aspiring? To exalt the rational faculty to a knowledge of the Deity? To trace divinity in the precepts of Christianity? Then let the world scoff at pretensions as it may, I will not think so ill of mankind as not to believe that there are many entitled to the praise of attaining the perfection of their nature. Percival is one instance of it. I contemplated him at his own house. I have studied him on our journey, and I can conceive nothing on earth superior to his character, though, as I have said, I believe it may be equalled by many. Natural and easy, void of pedantry, yet zealous for rule, the natural and noble passions strong but regular and under his dominion, he has by the means of a well understood and well directed education, acquired those habits, and cultivated those feelings, that constitute the perfection of human nature, and which, far from having so degenerate an opinion of our race as the world have, I think it would be impossible not to acquire and to cultivate under a Stockton occasionally assisted by a Towers.

Percival is exceedingly affected at the situation of his brother, and travels with the greatest apprehensions respecting him. He feels great relief in

unbosoming himself to me; and he has consulted me on all his intentions respecting Charles, if we are happy enough to find him out of danger. I am no stranger to the plans you hinted to me in one of your letters; but we have decided on an alteration. The idea of engaging a person to lose back to Charles at play the mortgage on the Barn was highly delicate, but it was so far ill chosen as it coincided with his passion for gaming, and might serve to strike the roots of it deeper into his habits. As Percival had purchased an assignment of the mortgage, I advised an open and brotherly gift at once. "The mischief of that," said Percival, "is, "that there would be danger of the affection of a "brother being converted into the gratitude of a "person obliged. I do not wish Charles to consider "me as his benefactor. If, indeed, he could lose "the idea of the benefit, in the stronger sensation "of affection and friendship of which the basis is "reciprocity:"—Here he broke off, and seemed to consider. "You push your distinctions to too nice "a point," said I, "but if I concur in them, allow "me the right of following your example; the reci- "procity you talk of is but a refined commerce of "gratitude; every attention, every kindness of what- "ever nature, is, in fact, a benefit to the mind that "receives it; the return of attention and kindness "does not efface the emotion of gratitude in the "one friend, but excites a similar emotion in the "other, so that in reality gratitude is the fruit of "friendship. Charles knows your disposition so "well that it will be no difficult matter to convince "him, that he will be rendering you an obligation "which no one on earth but himself has it in his "power to do."—"Yes, my dear Lord Digby," he replied, "this is the mode in which men should "think; I feel the force of the sentiment; and my

" only anxiety on the subject is, that Charles, in his " mixing with certain men, may be accustomed to " think differently: at all events I will stipulate this " with him as the consideration of our agreement." —" No," said I, " I think there should be another; " and you shall judge, Percival, whether it be a " more worldly one, or one spun even beyond your " own refining. I do not think the judicious arrange- " ment of your funds ought to be disturbed. It is " impossible for you to have purchased the assign- " ment of the mortgage but for a very large consi- " deration. My opinion therefore is, that a fund " should be raised out of the income of the Barn to " replace the sum you have paid, and if your bro- " ther's mind has received the advantage I hope it " has from misfortune, he will himself name a very " large portion of it." This was ultimately agreed upon as perhaps the mode more substantially delicate to be offered to Charles. My dear Towers, a hundred other points arose in the course of our journey to increase my esteem for Percival, and I am happy in being admitted among his bosom friends.

I write this at Lisle, where we have been detained by some form. Dumourier is still at Mons; but we shall find no difficulty in getting on, as I am known to some of the general officers in both armies. I shall keep this open till I arrive at the Austrian head-quarters, that I may give you some account of Charles.

* * * * * * *

Austrian head-quarters.

I have seen the brothers rush into each others arms. I have witnessed the noblest effusions of nature. How evident is it that these young men have sprung from the same stock! some little dif-

ference at first in the original acquisition of their perceptions, widened by the dissimilar hands into which they fell in the course of their youth, has occasioned the chief variation in their characters, for at the bottom Charles participates the principles and delicacy of Edward's mind. But I will not delay, by my observations, the pleasure I have in store for you. First, let me tell you, that I may not raise your hope too high, that Charles is by no means out of danger. In extracting the ball which entered his chest on the right side, some of the vessels have been injured, and require repose and time to recover them. A precipitate journey at present would probably cost him his life; his other wounds were of little consequence, being merely flesh wounds received from a sabre.

I will now give you a regular narrative of his meeting with his brother, and the previous steps we took. On our arrival at head-quarters we immediately enquired for Mr. Stormont, whom we had no difficulty in finding. Of course, I was not present at the first interview of the friends, which you may imagine was warm, and included topics to which no third person could be admitted. They soon, however, came to me, and made me happy, by informing me that there were great hopes of Charles's recovery. Mr. Stormont had dispatched a soldier for the surgeon, Mr. Brisbane, a very judicious and agreeable man, who immediately joined us, and together we concerted, in order to prevent any ill effects from a surprise, that the arrival of Percival should be gradually opened to his brother, who had been removed to a quarter nearer the surgeon, and who, though able to go about, was not permitted to extend his walks to any distance. It was determined that Brisbane should begin by carelessly speaking of my arrival, and that I should see him before

Percival was mentioned. The plan had the effect we foresaw; he spoke kindly of me, and expressed a desire to see me, which was immediately gratified, by Brisbane's conducting me to his quarters.

I found him alone: he looked pale and dejected. He rose, and came forward to meet me on my entering his apartment. I held out my hand to him, which he pressed, saying, "I am heartily glad to "see you, my Lord; the sight of you in Hainault is "a cordial to my spirits." Brisbane, giving him a caution against unusual exertion, left us together. "How good is this," continued he, "to come imme- "diately to see a poor lost fellow! My Lord, I "came here to seek death, but that worthy creature "who conducted you hither is determined not to "let me die, and a few such smiles as you have "brought with you will, I fear, banish the gloomy "wish."—"I mean they should, my dear friend," said I—"Die! What in the name of Heaven could "have driven you to such despair?"—"The total "ruin of my fortune, and disgust with mankind."— "Both, perhaps, the greatest blessings that could "happen to you."—"I should have expected that "sentiment from my brother Edward rather than "from you, my Lord: but, on my honour, I believe "it to be a just one. My fortune was a chain with "which my passions bound me in slavery, and my "enjoyment of the world rendered me a dupe to "the most odious of men."—"I rejoice to hear you "talk in this manner."—"Believe me," continued he, "that I would much sooner die than return "to so contemptible a life."—"But you shall re- "turn to a rational one," said I. "Yes," replied he, "but not to England. I will, if I get the bet- "ter of this wound, pursue my fortune as a soldier." —"But why not go back to England? you may "select your society."—"I have not the means of

" living."—" Are you deeply involved in debt?"—
" Very little; that is, according to the ideas of my
" worthless friends. I gave some notes at Chelten-
" ham; I have no other debts beyond the total
" wreck of my fortune, and, I thank God! the bitter
" reflections they produced drove me to the army."
—" But your brother is rich."—" Yes, my Lord,
" he is rich; and what is more, he is good and be-
" nevolent."—" Take my word for it he will set
" you to rights again."—" I shall never try him:
" Edward and I are not friends. He is as much
" disgusted with me as I with Sir Dicky Brainless.
" I beseech you, my Lord, never to think of men-
" tioning me to my brother."—" Come, I hope
" your quarrel is not serious."—" Yes it is: he
" charges me with corrupting that cursed fool Mrs.
" Stormont, and Ned, you know, looks upon seduc-
" tion as one of the most damning sins. And so it
" is," continued he, " and may I be damned if
" ever I corrupted her! The woman was handsome,
" and I was no saint; but bad as the business was,
" I think Edward's mode of detecting her infinitely
" more disgraceful."—" Here I must defend your
" brother," said I; " she was discovered by the let-
" ters that passed, and the stratagem to take her
" away from such an engagement as she had made
" cannot be called disgraceful."—He laughed.—
" Well," said he, " will you believe me that it was
" the first and only appointment I ever had with
" her?"—" Is it possible?" said I. " It is very true,"
said he, " and in spite of my anger against Stor-
" mont for talking me over with Edward, which, by
" the by, was groundless and ridiculous, I think he
" deserved a better woman. His infatuation blinded
" him, or he might long before have found her out
" to be worthless."

I leave you to judge, Towers, how much this vo-

luntary confession charmed me. I now told him that, since he left England, I had formed a greater intimacy with his brother, who, I assured him, had been wretched at his sudden disappearance, and who I knew would at this moment sacrifice the half of his fortune to recover him. "Aye, there it is," said he; "by recovery Edward means that I should "be as good as himself, and that is impossible."— "I am sure," replied I, "that he means nothing "more than to have you with him, and perhaps "your renunciation of dice. Let me inform him "that you are here. I know he has already taken "up the notes you gave at Cheltenham."—"Has "he taken up those notes do you say?" cried he eagerly. I assured him of it. "Well! he is a fine "fellow," said he, "and God bless him! Don't write "to him, but when you see him tell him that I be- "lieve he has not his equal upon earth."—"Would "not you be glad to see him?" said I; "I am con- "fident he would fly to you if he knew your situa- "tion."—"I believe him capable of any action," returned he, "that approaches upon divinity: but, "zounds! my Lord, it would be putting him to the "test, indeed, to propose his leaving so beautiful "a creature as Julia, to cross the channel, and "make his way through the frosts of Brabant and a "theatre of war, to find out a lost and worthless "fellow of a brother."

Philip, I am sure you partake my sensations. They were exquisite: I would have gone to the White Sea for them. "If I were not afraid," said I, "of counteracting Mr. Brisbane's determination, "I would tell you that as soon as he knows where "you are, it is his intention to come to you."— "Then I beseech you, my Lord, not to give him "such a journey at present, for his very inten- "tion merits better; though, on my life, I have not

"a wish so near my heart at this moment as to shake "hands with him."—"And at this moment," said I; "but keep Brisbane's caution in mind; at this "moment shall so affectionate, so noble a wish be "gratified."—"What do you mean, my Lord?"—"I mean that on you your brother's happiness de-"pends."—"Is it possible," cried he, "that he can be "at head-quarters? Do not be afraid of my wound: I "am much better than Brisbane would allow me to "think myself. Be assured that the sight of Ed-"ward would be the best balm that could be admi-"nistered."—"Say you so? Then be composed, "and you shall receive it." He fixed his eyes upon me; the paleness of his cheeks gave way to a little flush; a moisture overspread the surface of his eyes; and, after a short pause, he exclaimed, "Gracious "Heaven! what a spirit! but come, let us go to "him."—"No, that must not be, compose yourself "while I go for him. He is at hand; I shall not be "gone long." Having thus prepared him, I went for Edward, whom I made happy as we walked, by the account I have now given you, and in a few minutes I had the happiness of seeing the brothers in each others arms, exclaiming, the one, Dear Edward! the other, Dear Charles!

The first interview passed in affectionate enquiries: Charles told Edward the mortifications he had met with, and the disgust he had conceived at the world; and Edward told Charles of the happy party at the Elms, thanked him for making him acquainted with Mr. Stanhope, and related the scene between young Stanley, or whoever else he be, and the old Lord at Powic-castle. I parted them, without suffering them to discuss any future arrangement, and I returned with Edward to our lodgings, where I have been stealing an hour from sleep to get this ready for the courier, who sets out early in the

morning. By my next you shall hear the final result of Edward's plan; meanwhile accept the repetition of our best regards, and communicate the pleasure I send you to the loved party at the Elms. Adieu!

LETTER LXXXIX.

PERCIVAL TO JULIA.

A glowing retrospect—Short but sweet.

My agitation on seeing my brother wounded, pale, and dejected, has rendered me incapable of using my pen on any subject, but the love that reigns in my heart, where my Julia triumphs over all. Her image accompanies me wherever I go, and the hours given to other thoughts in the course of the day, are at night repaid to me in delightful dreams. Last night Queen Mab presented you to me as you were coming over the lawn at Bevil-lodge to meet me in the Octagon at the rising of the sun, and with the magic of her fairy wand she afterwards transported me back to the first moment of our meeting, when my eyes turned from your picture to feast themselves upon the original. I loved you not with more ardour, Julia, in those hours of delightful wooing than now, perhaps hardly so much; for my love certainly increases, and Julia, Julia is the life of Edward.

Charles has already amply repaid me for my journey, but by nothing so sweetly as the warmth, as the rapture with which he spoke of my Julia. I have just come from him with Lord Digby, who has assured me that he will write to Towers fully, which I shall leave him to do, as I am all anxiety, and

wish to have a conversation with Stormont. I shall therefore seal this short letter before I go out, and put it into his Lordship's hands to send with his.

Kiss my boy and girl for their father. My best affection to *our Bevils*, Towers, and Stockton. Kindest greetings to the Eemigrées and Stanhope. Tell the latter I hope he will not desert the party, at least not till sometime after our return, which I trust need not be very long delayed. God protect and bless my Love!

LETTER XC.

PERCIVAL TO JULIA.

Stormont—Love—Charles—An agitation—What renders a woman fit to live in kind intercourse with men in general without danger—An arrangement.

I WROTE you a short letter, my dear Julia, the day before yesterday. I now resume my pen to communicate the occurrences of the intervening hours and our plan. After I had given my last to Lord Digby, I went to Stormont. With what pleasure did I relate to him the assurance Lord Digby had received from Charles, that the frustrated appointment at Ranelagh was the first that Arabella had ever made with him! With what pleasure, Julia, did I hear it myself from Lord Digby! and with what delight did I recollect that I was instrumental in crushing the intrigue so early!

Poor Stormont! small was the change my information wrought in his feelings. "To you, Perci-"val," said he, "I know what joy it must be, and "so far I participate it; but to me it is of little im-"portance: She has forsaken me—the wound her

" desertion left is incurable. Her conduct, how-
" ever, is not only unpardonable, it is despicable;
" I will never see her again: yet when I think that
" she must sink into distress and misery, my wound
" bleeds the more, and I would still give the world
" to snatch her from such infamy and perdition."
What a noble spirit is this, Julia! and I should say, how has it deserved such a fate, did I not recollect how well you had accounted for it in your answer to me when I first informed you of the ill conduct of his wife. I shall never forget your words: " A
" few glances from fine eyes, looks of delight, some
" flattering dialogues, and mutual pressures of the
" hand, set the blood in motion; the deluded pair
" call it love, and rush headlong into matrimony."
Yes, Julia, the man who inconsiderately marries the person of a woman, without including her soul in the union, ought not to be surprised at finding a mental ceremony inadequate to the support of a tie solely personal. Yet, if my friend is not blameless, this we may say for him, that he possesses a spirit which would have ripened his emotions into the double nature that renders the passion really love, had he fortunately found a ray of mind in his wife. Though he was gratified, in some degree, to find that my brother had not been the debaser of her honour, we both agreed that there remained a sufficient point of delicacy to make it desirable that there should be no meeting between him and Charles, at least for the present. Lord Digby concurring in this opinion, it is resolved that they shall not see each other.

The whole of yesterday was passed in Charles's room, and at dinner we were joined by his surgeon, Mr. Brisbane, whose skill and prudence have been attended with good effects. Charles has consented to return, upon my convincing him that with a little

management he will recover the Barn; but the worthy Brisbane objects to his travelling for some time; he says he will speak more positively in the course of a week as to the period of our departure, of which I shall lose no time to inform you: meanwhile let the good tidings I have sent you re-animate the spirit of happiness at the Elms.

If Stanley comes from Shrewsbury in consequence of my letter, let him lodge in the village if he can stay, and do you and Towers get all the information you can respecting his namesake, and send me an account of what you collect. A mail is arrived, it is possible I may have letters. I shall shut up my desk, and run with the impatience of a lover to claim them.

* * * * *

My ardour was rewarded, but with what agitation has it been succeeded. I have received both your letters and that from Towers together: by some delay of the packet at Dover they came in the same mail. How shall I begin, or where find words! I have already blessed God for his goodness to me; I have wondered at the interposition of his Providence; and I have yielded my heart to Henry Tankerville in a tribute of admiration and praise. I have felt all the fire of indignation and resentment against the villain Stanhope, laughed at his freezing, and shuddered at his destiny, but how shall I express my admiration of my Julia! Language is unequal to the swelling triumph of my heart in the possession of such a woman. You know your Edward, let your imagination paint the rest. How justly do you reason on the diabolical crime of seduction! and how true is your remark that principle alone is the bulwark of female virtue! Good passions may be its

auxiliaries, but it is principle only that can defy the foul fiend; and with that no woman needs shun the intercourse of men. It admits the pleasing interchange of general kindness, and filters it from the filth and venom of flattery. No, Julia, you do not mean to glorify yourself to me, but your actions glorify you in the sight of your God. Conceive, my Love, that he permitted myriads of spirits to look on, and you will find how impossible it is for your Edward to add to your glory.

I have written this immediately on perusing the letters. I will now go and communicate their contents to Lord Digby and Charles; and I will keep this letter open to add the result, for what I have read renders me so impatient to return, that I think of setting off without Charles, being satisfied that with common prudence he is out of danger.

* * * * *

I have not time, my Julia, to describe at length the effect produced by the letters on Lord Digby and Charles; for, having decided on my journey, I have devoted my time to them and to Stormont, and have but just flown to my pen for a few minutes to close this letter for the mail that is to be dispatched in the course of an hour.

Your first letter produced mirth, and your second indignation, which in Lord Digby almost, and in Charles quite, amounted to rage. Towers's account of Tankerville raised admiration and affection for both mother and son, and an abhorrence of the unnatural father. Charles cursed the villain Stanhope —habit is not easily conquered—and said, he could curse himself for having introduced such a monster. Stormont listened to your letters with admiration and a tenderness accompanied by sighs and tears. I

was very much affected at the comparison he drew between his fate and mine; and I confess I have no hope for him but from the hand of Time.

The amiable Lord Digby—I cannot tell you how much I have been charmed with his character—conceiving that the accounts from the Elms would make me very anxious to return, went immediately to Mr. Brisbane, to consult him again as to the time of Charles's removal, and finding that he thought it could not prudently take place in less than a fortnight, he called on Stormont, and arranged with him a plan for my immediate departure. His Lordship proposes to stay and accompany Charles; and Stormont insists on seeing me through the Low Countries. Charles himself entreated Lord Digby to prevail upon me to return to England, promising to follow us; nor would he hear of my Lord's staying behind, till he was assured by him that he had already been arranging my journey with a very respectable officer from the army who had obtained leave. This satisfied him, and Stormont and I are to set off as soon as we can provide ourselves with papers for the journey. Do not be uneasy about us. Stormont will throw off his regimentals, and travel as an English gentleman, and we shall take letters from Lord Digby to some of the inhabitants of the principal towns through which we have to pass. I long to be at home, and to press you to my bosom. Adieu!

LETTER XCI.

PERCIVAL TO JULIA.

Percival prevented from embarking—On what occasion—He visits a lady in her bed—The emotions of a husband—Prayers—The lady dies.

Ostend.

A VERY unexpected occurrence has happened to detain me from the arms of my Julia, and I seize an opportunity of writing to prevent her being alarmed. I write within sight of the sea on which I should have been already embarked, but for the duties of friendship.

We arrived at this port the day before yesterday, as the evening was closing, and finding that the packet would not sail before the next or succeeding day, I prepared myself with patience accordingly, and we sat down to dinner. We were attended by an English waiter, who, with other information, told us that a sad circumstance had occurred at the inn a few days ago. "There's a poor lady," said he, "in the house, going fast out of this world, from the "cruel usage she received from a man who got "away in the last packet that sailed. At first I did "not much mind her being a little trimmed, because "she seemed a match for him, and was mazingly "provoking, but we can't help feeling pity for any "fellow-creature a dying: and if she does die, if "that big fellow that killed her an't a murderer, I "never wiped a glass."—"Who is the lady?" said Stormont. "I can't rightly make out," replied the waiter. "They are English, and lived expensively. "They brought a French maid with them, and they "were here near a week waiting for a packet: they "had got their things on board, and their passports "ready; however, just before the vessel sailed, there "was a dreadful fray between them, but we thought

" nothing of it because it was usual. At last, the " gentleman went off with the French girl, and left " the lady behind; for she swore she would not go " with him after the treatment she had received; " and bad enough it was; for when my mistress went " to her, there was she with her head all cut by a " glass he had thrown at her, and what's worse, he " had kicked her in the side in such a manner, that " they say it will be the cause of her death."— " What brutes are there on earth!" said Stormont— " don't you know the lady's name?"—" The French- " woman," answered he, " said as much as she was " not the gentleman's wife, though I suppose she " takes his name."—" And what is his name?" said I. " I'll go and ask our *Commissionaire*," said he; " but it's something like Rumbold."

The name struck me with horror, but it produced no alteration in Stormont's countenance; from which I concluded that he had heard nothing of Arabella's connexion with that man. In me the change was so visible, that he asked what was the matter with me. I was at a loss what answer to make. To rouse his deplorable feelings upon an uncertainty seemed cruel. I rose without answering, intending to go out and enquire into the fact; but before I had got half across the room, the hostess herself came in, and addressing us in French, said, the lady was an unfortunate country-woman of ours, and that her name was Stormont. " Gracious Heaven!" cried my friend, " is it possible? Oh! Percival, this is " too much: it must be Arabella." I was too well convinced that it was, but I endeavoured to compose his agitated spirits. I conjured him, by the name of friendship, and as he was a man, to moderate his feelings, and to remember that it was incumbent on him to bear with fortitude the trials to which he was called. " Where is she?" said he;

"I will fly to her; I will save her; she may yet re-
"pent." With some constraint I prevailed on him not to leave the room till I had ascertained the circumstances, and I desired that the Doctor who attended her might be immediately sent for. Upon this the hostess informed me that the only Doctor that had been near her was an English gentleman, who had arrived in the last packet, which came in the same day on which the other sailed, and that he was now in the house.

Having obtained Stormont's promise to behave with manly fortitude, I sent my compliments, and requested to see him immediately. He did not suffer us to wait, and soon put us out of doubt as to the fate of the miserable Arabella. Rumbold had knocked her down, and the kicks he had given her on the side and chest had so injured her frame, that the consequence had been a mortification, and the surgeon declared that he had no doubt she would expire in the course of the night or the next day. Stormont's countenance indicated his agony, and he resolved to see her. "I have no objection to it," said the surgeon, "for I have no hope whatever of "her life: but if you are any relation, let it be done "with as much gentleness as possible. I came from her "but a few minutes before I received your message: "the pain she suffered is abated, and she will go off "easily, if her mind is not agitated." Poor Stormont sighed and wept. I asked the surgeon if he had apprized her of her state. He said he had not done it positively; for on his barely hinting her danger, she had broken out into bitter exclamations, declaring she would not die. He then proposed to return, and prepare her for seeing us. I desired him to use my name, to tell her that I was travelling, and that hearing of her situation I was anxious to render her any service in my power.

While he was gone, I said all that I could to inspire my friend with resolution to bear the scene that awaited him, and he promised to behave with firmness, agreeing that I should first see her without him. The surgeon soon returned with a message, that she would be glad to see me, and I followed him to her apartment, at the door of which he left me. The chamber was an ordinary one. A Frenchwoman came to the door, and led me round a skreen to a bed placed sideways in an alcove. By the bed stood a table, on which was a candle; and a chair was advanced ready to receive me.

My pity, Julia, was mingled with some degree of contempt, when I found the vain woman had been preparing her head-dress for the interview. "Good "God!" exclaimed she on seeing me, "who could "have had an idea of meeting you at Ostend! I de- "clare I thought it was your brother. Is Mrs. Per- "cival here, and when did you see your friend "Stormont?" At this I was more and more shocked. It was not, however, a moment to give way to such emotions, and I felt it incumbent on me to make her aware of her approach to eternity. "Mrs. "Stormont," said I, "I grieve to see you in this "state."—"Oh, never mind it," replied she, "I "am getting better, I'm sure; for I am much easier "than I was. Yesterday, I know by what Mr. Par- "ker said, that he thought I should die, but I am "much better to-day I assure you."—"Take the "opportunity then," said I, "of reflecting seriously, "lest any change for the worse should take place." She was alarmed at this. "Has Mr. Parker," cried she, "told you there is any fear of it?"—"He "has hinted some apprehension:" said I. "What!" exclaimed she with agitation, "am I likely to die?" —"At all events," replied I, "I would in your "situation endeavour to prepare my mind for so

" probable an event."—" That," cried she, " is as " much as to say, Mr. Parker has told you I shan't " recover. Oh! what shall I do? I am too young " to die, Mr. Percival. I can't bear the thoughts of " it, I can't die, I can't die, I'm not prepared to " die."

I will not, my dear Julia, continue this deplorable scene in detail. After much persuasion I succeeded in composing her so far as to be able to introduce the name of her husband. " Poor fellow!" said she, " he thought I used him ill, but I did no more " than many others do. Every man does not take " it so much to heart." This convinced me that her mind had sunk much lower than even when she left Stormont at Clifdon, so true is it that

The soul grows clotted by contagion.

She was more surprised to hear that my friend was in the house than that his goodness led him to wish to see her; and when she desired me to bring him, she added, " Pray send for a physician, for " though I think Mr. Parker is mistaken, yet I am " frightened out of my senses, for I have no feeling " at all on one side of me."

When I returned to Stormont, I prepared him as well as I could for the degenerate state of Arabella's mind before I accompanied him to her chamber. As he approached the bed, she held out her hand, and coolly said: " How do you do, Stormont?" He took her hand, and sitting down, bathed it with his tears. " Lord! why do you cry so?" said she. He was silent. " What, do you think I shall die?" continued she: " where's the physician?"—I was shocked beyond expression. Stormont too was shocked. Raising his head, which he had laid upon her hand, and looking at her through his tears, he exclaimed: " Is this *my* Arabella Nugent?"—

"Lord! Frederic!" said she, "how can you talk "so? Ah! you are a good soul! and many and "many a time have I repented the hour I left Clif-"don. But that's past. Do you know I don't like "this numbness that's creeping over me: where's "the physician? you don't think I shall die, do "you?"—"Percival!" cried Stormont, still keeping his eyes fixed on the lost Arabella, "Is this "*my* Arabella Nugent?"—"Lord! Frederic!" said she, "don't you know me? come kiss and be "friends." Stormont wiped away his tears. "Won't "you give me a kiss?" said she. "Yes, Ara-"bella," replied he; "take this kiss." He pressed his lips to hers, then added, "but it is now a kiss "of forgiveness on a last adieu! Farewell!" I was astonished to see him, on saying this, break from her, and walk firmly and resolutely out of the room. "What's the matter with him?" said Arabella: "can't he bear to see me ill? what ails me? "did you send for the physician?" She had hardly asked me this question before the hostess herself ushered in Mr. Parker and a German physician, whom I had requested him to send for, as he held the highest reputation in the town.

Mr. Parker had given him an account in French of the state in which he had found his patient, and what had been done. Though a skilful man, he did not possess all the delicacy of our countryman, and after a short visit, he made no scruple of saying before her, that there was no occasion for his attendance, as a mortification had taken place, which must soon prove fatal. "Oh! you cruel man!" cried she, and burst into tears. "Is there no English phy-"sician to be had?" I made a signal to Parker to go with the physician and pay him his fee, and as he went I requested him in a whisper to attend to my friend. He bowed and left us. At the same time

the Frenchwoman, whom I had found with Arabella, came in from the corridor, where she had been waiting. "Mr. Percival! Mr. Percival!" cried Arabella, "come here." I went to the bed. "I can't "tell what's the matter with me," continued she: "are they going to let me die in reality?" I begged her to be composed, and to address herself to her Maker. "I don't know any prayer by heart," said she, "for I have never said one since I left school: "Oh! do pray for me, Mr. Percival, I am a sad, "lost, and abandoned wretch." Upon this I told her that if she wished for prayers, I would enquire if there was a clergyman in town, and if not, I would come back myself. "Do, pray do," cried she.

I then left her with the Frenchwoman, and, on enquiry, I found there was a protestant divine living in the place, for whom I immediately sent, and was going in quest of Stormont, when the surgeon, Mr. Parker, came up to me, and said that my friend had desired to be alone, and had retired to a chamber. To this I was shown, and found Stormont in considerable agitation, yet not so much as I expected. He came forward to meet me, and asked what the opinion of the physician was. On hearing it, he took me by the hand and said: "Percival, I wish it "were over, for I cannot erase the ideas of Ara- "bella Nugent; and it does not signify that my "imagination or my heart denies any resemblance "to her in the poor woman I have seen, when my "senses tell me that the form she wore is expir- "ing. I shall be much more composed than I have "been since we parted, when I know she is no more; "but her death is an awful lesson. Go, my dear "friend, perform the office of a comforter to her, "and come to me again before you go to bed." Finding him so rational, I expressed my satisfaction, and left him to return to Arabella.

Miserable, I will not say deserted, woman! for the goodness of Providence to her husband in making him a witness of her imbecility, extended into a mercy to her, by the attentions it procured her at her last moments, which she would not otherwise have received. When I returned to her chamber, she was in childish tears, and complaining of the hardship of dying so young. It was hardly possible to converse with her, and the arrival of the clergyman was a great relief to me. I will abridge the rest of this scene, my dear Julia. When she found herself dying, she was struck with horror at the state of vice in which she had lived, assuring me of her own accord that Charles was blameless with respect to her. "But will repentance save me?" said she to the clergyman. He consoled her as much as he could, saying at the same time, that all depended upon sincerity, of which the searcher of hearts was the judge. He then read prayers, and administered the sacrament, after which she seemed more resigned, and soon fell into a stupor from which she never revived, expiring about four o'clock in the morning. I went immediately to Stormont, who was walking to and fro in his room. When I informed him that Arabella had breathed her last, he again shed tears, and assuring me he should be able to conquer his feelings, insisted on my going to rest, which indeed I now wanted very much, but I did not leave him till I saw him in bed. I then pressed his hand and retired.

In the morning I visited Stormont before he was up, and at his request undertook to give directions respecting Arabella's funeral. She is to be buried to-morrow. Mr. Parker and I will attend her to the grave. The packet in which this letter will be conveyed is to sail this evening, but I hope to cross in the next, for we have arranged our movements after

the remains of Arabella are consigned to their resting place. I would not have left Stormont so soon, had it not happened very fortunately that Mr. Parker, who is a genteel and sensible man, was on his route to the army we had left, and with which my friend is resolved to continue till he has perfectly recovered the tone of his mind. They will see me off before they proceed on their journey. When I get to London I shall drive to Lord Digby's, where I hope to meet a letter from you or Towers. Adieu!

LETTER XCII.

JULIA TO PERCIVAL.

Monsieur de Rallon—St. Valeri—A question—Henry Tankerville—Caroline.

I TAKE up my pen to send my Edward a greeting on his arrival in Hanover-square, and to tell him how eager my bosom is to greet him at the Elms. We have received all the letters from the Continent. I need not tell you the emotions they produced. The whole party were enraptured with the account given by Lord Digby of Charles, and of your interview with him: and your striking description of the lamentable conduct and end of Arabella Stormont excited commiseration mingled with disgust.

I cannot pretend to you, my dearest Edward, that I have any sorrow or compunction at my letters having brought you away: it is, on the contrary, a most pleasing though unpremeditated consequence; and as I have the happiness to know that you have embraced your brother, that he is out of danger, and that the worthy Lord Digby stays to come with

him, I rejoice to think that I shall so soon press you to my heart.

I will not trouble you with a word about the villany that has procured me the unexpected joy of your immediate return, but I must prepare you for another visitor at the Elms: not Miss Beach, for she returned home the next day; but Monsieur de Rallon, who has joined us. I wish I could tell you that he was accompanied by St. Valeri, but of him I have to communicate to you woful tidings. He wrote to his wife to consult with Sir William Oldham on the subject of discharging the incumbrances on his beautiful place at Ostroville, to which he seems to have been more attached than to any thing else on earth. In the present state of French affairs it was reasonable to decline any hazard, besides that Sir William could not legally comply with his wishes, and Madame de St. Valeri returned a letter to that effect. She told me in confidence that she did not love the man, and that she would with pleasure give twice the value of Ostroville never to see the master of it again. An attempt to reason any one into love would be absurd; but I said what I could to reconcile her to duty. "You talk so," said she, "because you are happy. "Duty and pleasure go hand in hand with you; sepa- "rate them, and then see whether you would not say "with me, *il vaut mieux être heureuse qu' être sage.*" I assured her that I was very sincere when I protested against the maxim, and that I would embrace calamity with conscious rectitude, in preference to all the joys the world could afford me, accompanied with the remorse that never fails to attend the neglect of duty. Her answer was: "Well, I love you so "much that I'll strive to think as you do: only an- "swer me one question sincerely."—"What is it?" said I. "Would it break your heart," replied she, "if your husband were to love another woman?" I

told her I could not answer a question, on which I could not even permit myself to think. "You suppose it impossible," said she, "and when I look at "you, I almost suppose so too: but it is very vain "of you, and don't be surprised if I convince you "of the contrary one of these days. My beauty "against yours; blue eyes against brown."—She is a giddy yet clever and pleasing creature.

Soon after our conversation, her sister-in-law received a letter from Monsieur de Rallon, informing her that he was in England, that he had narrowly escaped the vigilance of the Convention, which had been too active for St. Valeri, who, loitering at Paris with an overweening fondness for his patrimonial lands, and being at the same time so incautious as to speak contemptuously of the French demagogues, had been arrested. Towers ran up to town to meet Monsieur de Rallon, and brought him to the Elms. The meeting between him and Madame de Rallon was affecting, and little Rose embraced him with a lively joy. St. Valeri's fate is unknown; but his arrest has thrown a gloom upon the party, and I was pleased to see Madame de St. Valeri's sensibility awakened into tears: not that I think she would long mourn if he were to be taken off, which Monsieur de Rallon has in confidence told Towers he has little doubt will be the case.

Captivated as we have all been from the first with Henry Tankerville, he improves upon intimacy. He plays admirably on the bass, and his duos with my father's violin are delightful. He is a good deal with Lord Powic, whom he visited, on hearing that Lord Chopstone had left the country. The old Earl has made him a present of Lord Coteridge's bass, and takes great delight in hearing him play. He is now at Powic-castle. Our dear Caroline is well, and as lovely in spirit as in person. A very

little encouragement from you, and a certainty of being beloved by Henry, would give her heart to the dominion of the sweetest of the passions, which she is at present suspending and guarding herself against. As for the state of his heart, I have no doubt about it. But he feels poignantly the situation in which he stands with his father, and I can easily perceive that he is himself combating, with a manly resolution, a passion to which his pride tells him he must not yield.

I grow more and more impatient as I suppose you nearer and nearer. Your dear girl and boy are well; hasten, my beloved Edward, to them, and to your

JULIA.

LETTER XCIII.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY.

The end of a villain—The punishment of a fool—Suicide generally preceded by insanity—St. Valeri—A dragon—Evidence produced by a ribbon and a copy of verses—News from Paris—The party at the Elms separate.

I HAD hardly received your letter from head-quarters, my dear Lord, when I was informed by Julia of Edward's intention to return immediately, and I therefore suspended my acknowledgment till I could give you tidings of his arrival. How delighted was I with the tribute paid by your Lordship's pen to the character of our friend Percival! and I was not less charmed with the account you gave of Charles, and of the meeting of the brothers.

Edward is arrived at the Elms. He wrote to you from Ostend by the return of Mr. Stormont, and

gave you an account of the death of Arabella. He had a very quick passage, landed at Harwich, and posted immediately for town, where he slept at your Lordship's house, and was with us next day at dinner.

Two unexpected events have happened since the communications you received through Percival. The wretch Stanhope has put an end to his existence, by swallowing a vial of laudanum, which we suspect to have been procured for him by Lord Chopstone. On a pretence of restlessness, he had endeavoured to obtain it from an apothecary whom he had sent for, but who, being on his guard, had given him a quantity barely sufficient for the purpose of composing him. After this he wrote a letter to Chopstone, and I have no doubt depended upon his logical head to concur in a demonstration, that a man who is tired of his life has a right to get rid of it: but be that as it may, a man soon after called from his Lordship, and desired to see Stanhope, who in the course of the night took the poison, and was found dead in the morning. The person who came from Lord Chopstone did not wear his livery, and was a perfect stranger. He had no sooner seen Stanhope than he went away, and has ever since remained unknown. This boisterous dealer of syllogistical sophistry is certainly possessed of more cunning than the villain's other friend the Baronet, a letter from whom was found in his pocket, with the vial that had contained the laudanum. It is too curious to withhold from you. We must preserve the original; but Madame de St. Valeri has been kind enough to copy it for the amusement of yourself and Charles.

Brainless, although evidently an accomplice of Stanhope's, is, I fear, out of the reach of the law, and he has never been within the reach of shame. We waited for Percival's return to decide upon what

measure we should take to expose him. Edward has determined upon leaving him to his existing state of contempt, and indeed I know not what mental punishment could be inflicted on such an insignificant, worthless fellow, unless one could descend to show him that instead of his making a jest of his conundrums, his conundrums make a jest of him.

As for Lord Chopstone, he left the country the very day he sent to Stanhope. Your Brighton acquaintance, Lightless, who has been paying holiday visits in this part of the country, in one of his calls here, observed, that *somehow, he didn't know how, but it struck him* that there was a law against procuring poison for people to kill themselves, and that from the suspicious circumstances attending the business, Lord Chopstone might be tried for it. His Lordship however seems to have played sure; but if he is not gone to keep himself in countenance with his friends of the Convention, a passage in Brainless's letter will touch him, though it may not make him blush.

Thus terminates the villany of the completest hypocrite I ever saw: a hypocrite in action not in words; a deceiver by pleasantry and not by sentiment; a knave, seducer, and suicide! I shudder at the thought: a miscreant unable to endure the scoff of man, braves the chastisement of God! yet no, my Lord, it is not so: it is the deficiency of imagination as to future suffering, and the redundant force of it in painting immediate horror: this redundancy hurries the mind out of the dominion of reality; and I firmly believe that self-murder is rarely committed till the imagination is wrought to a certain degree of insanity. But let us leave him to the Judge he has chosen.

The other event I allude to, is the arrest of poor St. Valeri, a man, by all I have heard, if not com-

manding great esteem, certainly not meriting an ignominious end, which I fear either has been or will be his fate. Both he and De Rallon were obnoxious to the leaders of the Revolution; the latter has managed to escape in disguise as the servant of an English gentleman, but the unfortunate St. Valeri pined over his property too long, and has been seized by the sbirri of Robespierre's party. I will not tell you that I think your friend Madame de St. Valeri is to be pitied; but I will tell you to her credit that she has shed tears, and that she has, either from feeling or a sense of decency, suspended her habitual gaiety. It has raised her several degrees in my estimation, and I think if she can be preserved from the snares of imagination for a year or two more, that we may hope happy consequences from the improvement of her judgment.

With this hope I will now leave her, to tell you that I have got to my old trick of match-making, and have called in the aid of Edward and Julia, though it will be no difficult task in the present case, for it has been more than half made already by Nature and by Love. The only dragon now in the way between Henry and Caroline, is a beautiful monster in the shape of Delicacy and nice Honour, which sings in the youth's ear, that considering his melancholy and deserted state, and the tie of gratitude he has raised, it would be vile in him to aspire to the damsel. We shall fell this monster in spite of its beauty, and devote to Hymen another pair of votaries of the genuine God of Love.

You have no doubt, my Lord, that they have been long in love with each other; but you will not take it ill of me I know, if I give you a fresh instance, on each side, of the progress of their passion. On Caroline's part I detected it in a very trivial incident which I had premeditated. One day it happened

that Julia, Caroline, and myself, were together, waiting for the rest of the party to go to dinner. Tankerville was the first that joined us, and I was at the moment talking of his mother's picture. Far from dropping the subject I requested him to show it. "Most willingly;" said he, and he took it from his bosom. The beautiful face drawn for Mrs. Tankerville in the bloom of her youth was admired both by Julia and Caroline: but, watching Caroline, I found her look fixed on the ribbon to which it was tied. I saw the emanation of her soul in her eye. Her cheek flushed, and I read at her heart; "Happy Caroline! yes, "Henry loves you." Nor did it escape Julia, who knew the ribbon well. Caroline had put it round the neck of Triton, but it was the son of Idalia that put it round Henry's. At last—she could not help it—she took her eyes from the ribbon, raised them to Tankerville's, and, in a language that defied words, plainly said, "Your heart is mine." He thought not of the ribbon when he drew forth the picture, but his conscious countenance betrayed intelligence equal to Caroline's.

To complete my conviction, he went the very next day to Powic-castle, where he remained till Percival's return called him back to the Elms. To add to this on his part, his love of poetry has broken forth into stanzas descriptive of the damsel, to whom he ascribes the properties of beauty in a new and happy manner. He is not at this moment aware that I have them. Going into his room, where I expected to see him, I found he was gone out. I sat down for a few minutes at his table, on which lay his portfolio. I carelessly opened it, meaning to take out paper and scribble. Verses caught my eye, and I thought it no crime to read; but when I had read, I should have thought it a crime not to steal, which I did without detection. Edward and Julia

are the only persons I have shown them to, and I shall here transcribe them for you.

THE CAROLINE.

Three matchless properties combine
To make the female form divine;
Idalian properties, above
Distinguish'd in the Queen of Love.
But tho' of high celestial fame,
Among the gods they have no name,
Unvocal speak to sense divine,
As here to us in CAROLINE.

Observe the raptur'd eye that tells
What charm in due proportion dwells:
Proportion, which the art can give
To make the very marble live;
Traces the neck, the shoulder, waist,
The foot, the ancle, justly plac'd:
Men call it SYMMETRY divine,
But gods shall name it CAROLINE.

How spirit animates each feature
Of a lively, blooming creature!
O'er all the face its spells arise,
But chiefly eloquent the eyes;
There fly the secrets of the heart,
Thence lovers wordless vows impart:
While thus EXPRESSION we define,
The gods shall call it CAROLINE.

Come forth, Euphrosyne! I see
The charm that crowns the matchless three:
'Tis on that nether lip, and now
It darts across that farther brow:
Now to thy bosom sweeps the Loves,
And now beneath thy steps it moves:
'Tis GRACE, as worded by the Nine;
Call it, ye gods! your CAROLINE.

But should the Immortals now descend,
And for strict grammar rules contend,

Calling Dan Priscian to affirm
That each idea claims a term;
Do thou, Mæonides, arise!
Improve the language of the skies;
Then when the gods the three combine,
They'll call the union CAROLINE.

If you admire the verses, my Lord, I beg you will not fail also to admire that the passion they express is not love, but admiration,—so delicate is this fellow, even in his private thoughts. In spite of the weather, Edward means to take his trip into Derbyshire in the course of the next ten days, and we hope that when General Tankerville finds what esteem and affection his son has acquired among us, it will soften his heart, and rouse in him the feelings of nature. Should his soul, however, be impregnable by the avenues of virtue, we have been wicked enough to build some hope also on the ground of avarice and ambition. Caroline in point of fortune alone may be allowed to have high pretensions; and the man must possess more than mortal determination to resist such combined attacks. Adieu, my dear Lord, a thousand affectionate greetings attend you from our whole party.

* * * * * * *

P. S. I did not seal my letter yesterday, as I knew I should be in time for the foreign post to-day. The delay has given me an opportunity of adding the melancholy news of poor St. Valeri's death. De Rallon has this morning received a packet from a friend in London, containing letters which give him an account of the poor fellow's having paid the forfeit of his life, for daring to speak sincerely of the sanguinary party, which after spilling the blood of the too inoffensive Louis, can have no compunction in wading through that of every Frenchman who

was attached to him, or who on any principle whatever shall oppose its tyrannical career.

I think De Rallon a very sensible and amiable man. Though attached to the monarchy both by principle and birth, and highly tinctured with the old Gallic enthusiasm that surrounded the very name of the king of France with fascination, he is not unreasonable in his opinions and wishes respecting a counter-revolution, and frankly says that the happiness of the people at large should be the basis of it, and that he hopes to live to see it reconciled with the rights of property and rational usage.

St. Valeri's sisters are also very interesting. Their spirits, which were depressed before, have now given way entirely to the afflicting intelligence they have received. Madame de St. Valeri, though in some measure prepared for the event, was extremely shocked. This fine woman has a great share of good sense, and of noble nature, which I sincerely trust will bear her through the distorted fancies that have been gathered in her brain by the wild and eccentric modes of her perceptions.

In the beginning of next week De Rallon goes to town to attend to the disposing of the wrecks of his fortune. His friends, whom he has not yet met, desire to see Madame de Rallon with him: she and the little Rosa will therefore accompany him. Madame de St. Valeri, at her own request, is to remain for the present with Julia. Tankerville goes to Lord Powic. Edward at the same time sets out with the Bevils for Bevil-lodge, in his way to Derbyshire, and on his return we are all to meet in town, to shut out the rest of the winter. Henry knows nothing of the projected interview between Percival and his father.—May the result of it prove a blessing to our worthy young friend!

LETTER XCIV.

PERCIVAL TO JULIA.

Edward's journey, and conversation with Mr. Wollaston—His interview with General Tankerville—A new mystery—Effects of a forced marriage—Concealed grief eats into the heart—An instance of this affliction unexpectedly relieved—Virtue communicates its influence—Generosity and justice made to go hand in hand.

My dear Julia,

On our arrival at Bevil-lodge I had a visit from our worthy friend Atley, who pressed me to spend a day with him, but the weather being favourable, I thought it better to take advantage of it for the continuation of my journey, and to engage for a day on my return. As my absence therefore may be prolonged, I will not keep you in suspense respecting the issue of my visit to General Tankerville.

I first introduced myself to Mr. Wollaston, with whom I had a conversation, which though it did not clear my doubts as to the General's conduct, highly charmed me by the praises Wollaston lavished on his friend Henry. Of the General himself, except in regard to his behaviour to his son, he said nothing harsh; on the contrary, he assured me that for the most part his sentiments were just, and his actions, though a recluse, unexceptionable. "I am at "times," said Wollaston, "tempted to consider his "treatment of Henry Tankerville as a species of "insanity; for there is not a man on earth but him-"self who would not be proud of such a son. What "tends to confirm the suspicion is, the cool, me-"thodical proceeding of making a provision for him, "and then turning him adrift on the world. Is there "another young man at his age, but would run to

" inevitable ruin? Yet probably to the whole tenor " of his father's behaviour to him, does he owe the " uncommon strength of mind which he possesses. " God's goodness is often manifest in seeming evil. " I esteem it a happy insanity for my friend. When " you converse with the General, you will hear no " complaint from him of Henry: he has never made " one in his life to any person, but he often praises " him. In short it is the most unaccountable pre- " judice that ever betrayed the heart or intellect " of man." I frankly acknowledged to Wollaston how much I owed to his friend, and the affection with which he had inspired us all, telling him that I had come, unknown to Henry, to make the same acknowledgment to his father, and to endeavour to soften his mind by an account of the noble actions of his son. " He will receive you politely," said Mr. Wollaston; " but I have little hope of your " being pleased with the result of your interview. " Since I have resided in this place I have heard a " hundred instances of Henry's noble spirit through- " out his youth, repeated with delight by a variety " of people; and his father has heard them too, but " without effect: that steady determined repugnance " to his own offspring, which I call madness, remains " unconquered."

After this conversation I wrote a short note to the General, informing him of my wish to pay him a visit on a subject in which I was extremely interested. I sent it by Thomas, who soon returned with an answer, requesting the favour of my company to dinner; at the same time informing me that he was quite alone, Mrs. Tankerville being on a visit near Derby. Mr. Wollaston told me she was gone to attend upon her father, who was said to be dying. I went early, that we might have time to converse before dinner. He came out to meet me, and I

received from him all the politeness Wollaston had made me expect. After the usual civilities were exchanged, I lost no time in entering on the conversation respecting our dear Henry. I related minutely all the occurrences that had led to our friendship; I extolled his virtues, his understanding; I even dwelt on the beauties of his person, and I professed my affection for him with the utmost ardour.

General Tankerville listened to me with great attention, but his countenance betokened neither emotion nor indifference; there hung, as Henry told Towers, a settled gloom upon his brow. When I had done speaking, "Mr. Percival," said he, "I "have heard enough from you to convince me, that "the youth has merited your good opinion, grati- "tude, and affection; nor have you less convinced "me, that he has not merited them in vain. He is "fortunate in having acquired such a friend so "early in life. I am glad of it with all my heart; "and I do him but justice when I say, I believe that "he will never forfeit what he has so well acquired. "What more shall I say? You have thought it "right to expatiate to me on his merit, and your "view is to soften the obdurate breast of a father—"

Here I thought it necessary to assure him, that delicacy on this point was among the virtues of his son, and that we had not even known his name, till he was called upon officially by a magistrate, to make the deposition against Stanhope. "I believe "him equal to it," replied he. On this I could not help exclaiming, "Good God! how can you, then, "Sir, withhold from him the tribute of admiration "and of love so justly his due?"—"Mr. Percival," said he, "respect for the motives by which you are "actuated, prevents my asking in return, by what "authority you enquire into the state of my mind,

" or attempt to force my feelings? but, while I ac-
" knowledge that the inducement of this visit entitles
" you to my esteem, I must beg you to drop all
" farther conversation on the subject of it."

Finding that his heart was not to be wrought upon by addressing Nature, and provoked by his obduracy, I answered, half testily, " Before I do drop the con-
" versation, Sir, give me leave, I beg, to answer
" those questions, although you have not put them
" immediately to me, and to tell you on what au-
" thority my presumption is grounded." He looked at me with some surprise, and made a slight bow. It was not my intention to offend him. I recovered the tone of my voice. " Pardon me, General," said I, " and should the pretensions I have to make to
" your feelings in favour of my friend Henry not
" meet with your approbation; should you, after I
" have stated them, again wish the conversation
" dropped, I will yield, however disappointed I may
" be." I then repeated my obligations to Henry, painting the delicacy of his conduct to Caroline, and I frankly told him that I had come to solicit his permission to form an alliance between our families.

He looked at me some time without speaking, as if he was considering his reply, then said, " Mr.
" Percival, this is a very unexpected appeal, and I
" feel myself unprepared either to act or to speak
" on the occasion. You will, I am sure, have no
" objection to allow me some hours reflection. Will
" you amuse yourself with a book till dinner-time?
" and in the afternoon we will resume our conver-
" sation on this subject." I could not but agree to his proposal, on which he put several books on the table, and retired.

In about an hour he came himself to call me to dinner, and while we were at table, entertained me with some anecdotes relative to the American war,

in which he had taken a part. His conversation, however, frequently gave way to thoughtfulness, and his mind evidently laboured with a burden, that was the result of what had passed before dinner. When the cloth was removed, and the servant gone, we drew our chairs to the fire, and he addressed me in these words: "Mr. Percival, I have resolved to "repose in you a confidence, which I have, for near "twenty years, withheld from every human being, "and the subject of which has been eating into the "heart of the wretched man who speaks to you. "The alliance you have proposed is an irresistible "demand upon my honour, to disclose a secret "which I intended should have died with me. At- "tend to it, then, and afterwards act as you shall "think proper. The youth who has so captivated "you and your friends, and who, it must be con- "fessed, possesses uncommon qualities, has en- "venomed my life, has been a curse to my eyes "from the moment they first beheld him. Think "first, Mr. Percival, what must be the sensations of "the man, who, on being presented with a son by "his wife, doubts whether the child be his own; "then think what must be the sensations of him, "who has reduced that doubt into certainty:— "Henry is not *my* son."

Here Tankerville's emotions overcame him, and he burst into a flood of tears. I was more affected by his distress, than surprised at his suspicion, for suspicion I thought it, notwithstanding he talked of certainty. When he had recovered himself, I did not scruple to assure him, that I thought such a doubt must be a torment to a mind of any sensibility, and that I sincerely grieved it should be felt by him. "In my case," replied he, "it is certainty, "not doubt. I will not," continued he, "confide "in you by halves; you shall yourself examine the

" proof, and judge of the certainty.—In the spring
" of the year seventy-six, I married the beautiful
" Sophia Davenport, the daughter of a friend of my
" father's. I will own to you that she gave me no
" encouragement when I sought her hand; that I
" perceived she acted in compliance with her father's
" wish; and that I was sensible of her not wearing
" a smile on our nuptials. I was content to secure
" her person, and to hope for her heart.

" I was united to her but a very few weeks, when
" I was ordered to America. At my return she re-
" ceived me with kindness, but not with fondness;
" and when she presented Henry to me, not only
" my heart, but my eyes, told me he was not my son.
" The size and advanced state of the child, con-
" vinced me that I was not his father; and many
" trivial circumstances rushed upon my mind, to cor-
" roborate my suspicion. I concealed my chagrin;
" I betrayed no doubt; I was still enamoured of her
" person—but, personal affections, without the heart,
" occupy little thought, and are transient. Jea-
" lousy took possession of my soul, but I determined
" never to own it; I determined, if possible, not to
" give way to it; I even scorned to ask her why the
" boy had been christened Henry; for my name is
" William. I became a prey to discontent, and for-
" sook the world; it seemed ignorant of my misfor-
" tune, and I dreaded that it should ever be known.
" To conceal it, and to keep my wife from her lover,
" whoever he might be, I have here passed many
" years in retirement. No lover, however, has ap-
" peared, and from all I have since observed, I
" should rather suppose her a paragon of chastity,
" than a slave to passion. Very soon after my re-
" solution to retire, I determined to consult my
" reason in my behaviour, both to her and her son,
" but I have succeeded indifferently: disgust with

" the one, and aversion to the other, mingle with " all my thoughts and actions: nor have I been " less severe to myself; for I despise the man who " can take a woman's hand without her heart, and " the misery I suffer, I am sensible I deserve."

How rational and how affecting was this language, my dear Julia!—" Dear General," said I, " I feel " most sensibly for you; but while I thank you for " your confidence, will you be displeased with me, " if I take the liberty of observing, that the honour- " able manner in which you have spoken of Mrs. " Tankerville's exemplary conduct, is sufficient, in " my mind, to convert the certainty of yours into " doubt. Appearances I own are against her; but " nothing that you have said destroys the possibility " of Henry's being your son."—" I see," replied he, " that you are incredulous; I once wished to " be so too, and while I knew no more than you do " now, my mind still wavered with uncertainty. " My anxiety to be resolved, suggested an artifice " which proved successful. Let not your virtue re- " probate the means I took to satisfy my doubt; " till you experience the torture of suspicion, you " can be no judge of the irresistible impulse " to which I yielded. I ordered a beautiful inlaid " cabinet, of which both the outer door, and the " door of an interior recess, had locks of a peculiar " structure, which could be opened only by the keys " that were made for them. Having procured a " double set of the keys, I presented her with the " cabinet. It now stands in her dressing-room, " whither, as I wish to lay before you the fullest " proof of my assertion, I beg you will now accom- " pany me."

A momentry hesitation arose in my mind, with regard to the propriety of my inspecting a reposi- tory, which every person of honour must deem sa-

cred; but, after what I had listened to, it became, in fact, a justice due to both parties: I therefore followed him to a room within her bed-chamber. He locked the door of the bed-chamber, before we proceeded to the other, which was fitted up as a study, more than as a dressing-room. I could not but take notice of a table, on which were a bible and prayer-book, and underneath it was a hassock. "I "firmly believe," said he, "that since my return, "she has thought much more of a future world than "of the present one. This," continued he, "is the "cabinet, and to its contents I appeal for your judg- "ment."

Saying this, he opened it, and from the recess he took a drawer, which he desired me to observe. "I wish you to observe it," said he, "that you may "give me your opinion upon an idea which I have "formed, that she never touches the papers in it." There was a little packet sealed up, on the back of which was written, '*To be opened by General Tan-* '*kerville, in the event of my dying before him.*— '*Sophia Tankerville.*' Under this was a note unsealed, which had the appearance of having been enclosed in an envelope, and at the bottom lay a larger packet which was sealed. "I have, from "time to time," said the General, "visited this "drawer, to see if any alteration was made in it; "however, not only the packets have remained "sealed, but always exactly in the same position, "with the open letter, which I have constantly "placed as I found it, between them."—"I think "it evident," said I, "that Mrs. Tankerville is not "in the habit of inspecting the papers, for it is im- "probable that she should always place them so ex- "actly in the same situation."—"I think so too," said he, "and now pray read the open letter." He put it into my hand: the address was nothing more

than "*To Sophia*," and there was no other signature than that of *Henry* to the contents, which were replete with the most passionate expressions of love and transports of joy at hearing of her pregnancy: "I know," says the writer, "that if it proves a boy, "you will baptize him HENRY; that, be the fate "of his father what it will, you may always enjoy "the sound of a name, which it is one of my "greatest delights to think so dear to my Sophia; "and, if it be a girl, I charge you to name her after "yourself."—"Are you convinced?" said Tankerville. I returned the letter, and was silent. "I "see," continued he, "that you need no farther "proof; but I will give you another, if possible, "more positive still."

He then replaced the drawer in the recess, and took out another. In this was a red morocco case, containing a picture, which he presented to me. It is an elegant painting, and certainly has a great resemblance to Henry, which the General did not fail to point out. I remained silent on returning the picture, as I had done on returning the letter. He carefully replaced this also, and locking the cabinet, said, "There can now remain as little doubt in your "breast as mine, let us return to the fire below."

Having resumed our seats, he helped me to a glass of Madeira, and took one himself; after which we both remained silent for some minutes. At length he said: "I see, Mr. Percival, that my mis-"fortune excites your sympathy; but I also feel "what I did not expect, that the disclosure I "have made to you has removed an immense load "from my bosom. I have been a cannibal of my "own heart, through the dread of shame. Would "to God I had sought relief in friendship! How "wretched is he who cannot, or who dares not un-"bosom himself! Surely, I might have found some

" other man like yourself, above the prejudices of the " world; but I have brooded alone over this disgrace; " I have contracted a morose appearance; I have " astonished, and, perhaps, disgusted the whole " neighbourhood." I told him that the effect he acknowledged, helped to relieve the painful sympathy the observation of his suffering had raised in me, and I assured him I could see no shame reflected upon him by the conduct of Mrs. Tankerville. " That," said he, " I know you will leave to " the unthinking world;—the disgrace which will " be apparent to you, is that which is apparent to " myself, the having married her without possessing her heart." I said I thought he had sufficiently expiated that, and I could not but advise an explanation with Mrs. Tankerville, as the means of establishing a confidence which would, on both sides, produce emotions favourable to a happier state of existence, provided he would allow the exemplary life she had led to atone for the single error she had fallen into. " The motives of your present con- " duct," said I, " cannot but be evident to her; at " the same time she lives under a consciousness " that they are well founded, and it is probable that " the packets in the cabinet contain explanations, " and a repentant address to yourself. It is a pity, " I think, that they are not seen; they might con- " tribute to smooth the future hours of your life." —" My sad habits," he replied, " are, I fear, too " deeply rooted to be altered. I have all along " thought as you do respecting the sealed packets, " but, in leaving them uninspected, I have not been " swayed so much by that opinion, as by the fear " of exposing my misfortune to the world by a rup- " ture with Mrs. Tankerville. Conviction could not " be rendered more complete; after which no curi- " osity could equal the apprehension of becoming

" the talk of the circles of fashion, and an object for " the finger of ridicule. I confess," continued he, " I do not see what good can be effected by an ex- " planation: it cannot render Henry my son, and it " would be no alleviation to my misery, to know " who his father is."

Finding that the calamity, notwithstanding the relief he had experienced from disburdening his heart, admitted no cure, at least for the present, I turned the conversation to the predicament in which Henry now stands. " The knowledge of his birth," said I, " will give the most pain to his own heart." —" I never intended it should come to his know- " ledge, Mr. Percival," replied he, " nor, perhaps, " is it necessary now. Your proposal of an alliance " with him as my son, rendered it impossible for " me, as a man of honour, to conceal from you that " I was not his father. You are to act as you " please, but it is in your power to take your mea- " sures, without opening his eyes to so shocking " a truth."—" General," said I, " you have done " me the honour of saying you think me above the " prejudices of the world; I should not deserve that " opinion, were I to suffer what I have heard and " seen to-day to have the slightest influence on the " esteem, affection, and gratitude, which Henry " has inspired me with. In spite, then, of his am- " biguous birth, I shall propose him to my sister, " and should she have no objection to him, it will " give me the greatest pleasure if he will accept her " hand. I agree with you, however, that it is best " to keep the world in ignorance of this fact, and I " shall, in consequence, make you a proposal, which " I hope will obtain your concurrence. I admire " the resolution you had formed, of not suffering " the secret to transpire; let us then agree to keep " it undivulged. Taking it for granted that a mar-

" riage will be agreeable to both, it is obvious that " Henry has, in fact, no right to a provision from " you; for this he is prepared, by what has already " passed between you and him; allow me then to " consider him as my father's son, and to give him " a fortune equal to my sister's; but, let this be " a private transaction, and let the fortune pass " through you. All I ask of you is, to let him re- " tain your name, and the reputation of being your " son."

General Tankerville seemed to be so struck with this proposal, that he apprehended he had misunderstood me, and finding he had not, he expressed his wonder at it. I asked him where the wonder could be, when I did not consider my life itself as adequate to the services Henry had rendered me. Could a portion of my fortune balance the preservation of my sister's life, and the restoration of my Julia?—After reflecting a moment, he exclaimed, " Good God! where have I been all my life! I " thank you, Mr. Percival—I am satisfied—You " have opened to me a channel of happiness, and all " I now request of you is, that you will allow me a " share of triumph on this occasion, that I may be " worthy of your friendship, to which I will sacrifice " the painful emotions that have so long been my " torment. My fortune is large, and I will provide " for Henry, on condition of being considered as " related to you."—" Generous man!" cried I, " you deserve to be happy."—" And I think I shall " be so," answered he, " if you will accept my " friendship, and indulge me with your society."

Conceive, my dearest Julia, how much I was charmed. I told him I was overpowered by his goodness, and should delight in cultivating the affection which we had mutually sown in each other's breasts. " You shall contrive the whole affair,"

said he, "and I will join in the execution of it; I "feel that to make others happy, is the grand source "of self-happiness: let me draw with you the wa- "ters from it. We will keep our secret from those "whom it may affect, and we will make much of it, "and enjoy it together:—Shall we, Percival?" He spoke this with an enthusiasm that spread itself to my heart. I pressed him to my bosom, and assured him that I was delighted more than I could express. "I will endeavour," said he, "to look upon Henry "with the eyes of a father; he is innocent, and his "virtues should make every man his father. Why "have I been so long blind? Had I unburdened "my heart before, had my better sentiments been "drawn forth by such an example, I should have "been long ago a happier man. My conceptions "have all arisen from a brutal selfishness, or so ge- "nuine a repentance as my wife's would have made "its way to my soul; I will take her to my bosom. "—Yes, Percival, she, and Henry, and I, shall owe "to this visit, to you, my friend, unlooked-for hap- "piness."

My Julia, I see in imagination the rapture which swells your dear bosom; just such was mine, when I heard what I have now written, and I shall leave you to imagine the effusions it produced. When the emotions excited by this unexpected turn were a little subsided, it occurred to me, that if we did not take care, we should suffer generosity, and the self-complacence that attends it, to cast a veil over justice. "Let us be just as well as generous, my "dear General," said I; "Henry has no more "right to your fortune, than he had before this "happy change." I can hardly tell you, my dear Julia, what Tankerville said in return to this, with- out the appearance of vanity, even to myself. The fact is, that our modes of conceiving things are no-

vel, though congenial to his spirit. I shall only tell you, it was determined that he should extend his generosity to Henry, to the utmost limit which justice to his own relations would permit, and that that justice should not be estimated according to their consciousness of it, for that would be low indeed, but according to our knowledge of their rights.

How do I bless Providence, my dearest Julia, for having prompted me to take this journey. I have promised to stay another day with the General, and I shall set out to-morrow for Bevil-lodge. I have made Wollaston happy, by telling him that there is a great change in the General towards Henry, but I did not think myself at liberty to be particular in my communications. General Tankerville remembers Towers, speaks in raptures of him, and has a thousand times wished that he had accompanied me. I mean, and it is with the General's consent, to communicate all that has passed to Caroline, and as my lovely Julia can do it as delicately as any being upon earth, she may, if she pleases, choose the time and the manner. Heaven bless her! Adieu!

LETTER XCV.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY.

An accident happens to Mrs. Bevil—Caroline's resolution—Madame de St. Valeri's grief—Towers at his old work again—Percival's sudden departure from the Elms—Madame de St. Valeri's sudden journey to town.

My dear Digby,

The enclosed extracts, or rather copy, of Edward's letter, on the subject of his journey into Derby-

shire, I sketched over in great haste, with the permission of Julia, while she was waiting for the packing up of a trunk, to go with her to Bevil-lodge; they will interest you, my Lord, and I could not let her go, without taking them down for you.

A sad accident has befallen Mrs. Bevil—her foot slipped as she was walking home from Stratford, and, though she has fortunately fractured no limb, the concussion was so great, and so general through her frame, that she was carried to the Lodge in great agony, and the medical gentlemen who attend her have not been very explicit in their opinion about her. This alarmed Bevil, and he immediately dispatched a messenger with a letter, expressing all his fears to Julia, whose sympathies you are too well acquainted with, to doubt that she would hasten to her mother. She received the letter from her father, on the same morning as Percival's, but a couple of hours later, and she immediately set off, with only her maid, for Warwickshire, leaving Madame de St. Valeri to the care of Caroline, and both to the care of Stockton and myself.

You will not suppose, my Lord, that we willingly permit the unfortunate Henry to play truant, to please old Lord Powic: your Lordship will see that we thought it rather awkward both for him and Caroline, that they should be much together, till Edward's visit settles the path to be pursued. But now that matters are determined, we'll have him back among us presently. Poor fellow! to be first thought a footman, then a General's heir, and now to prove the son of nobody, while Monarchs might be proud of such a son!—I hear a carriage—It is Edward's.—He is alone. It makes me fear news of Mrs. Bevil. Julia would have accompanied him,

had she been better. I must go and meet him. I will return to my pen in time for the post.

* * * * *

I am happy to tell you, on resuming my pen, that Mrs. Bevil is in no danger. It is Julia's own anxiety that detains her at Bevil-lodge, and her sweet attentions to her friends here that made her hurry Edward on to be with us.

I have been delighted with Edward's account of General Tankerville, and also of young Wollaston, Henry's friend. Tankerville's unhappiness has been the natural result of the false step he took in marrying Miss Davenport, and I see no reason why a man should be exempted from such consequences, when women are always assuredly the victims of a false step. But Providence seems disposed to reward both him and her, on account of his sufferings, and her repentance.

Edward has conversed with his lovely sister about Henry, and has concealed nothing from her. I was present, for you know I am in her confidence. After he had related the circumstances mentioned in the enclosed extracts: "Well, Caroline," added he, "what say you?"—"I say, my dear brother," replied she, "that such a man as Mr. Tankerville can "never owe much to external advantages; on the "contrary, he must be an ornament to any situa- "tion, and an honour to all his friends."—"Right, "my love," cried Edward; "and you will give "him your hand?"—"What! before he asks it?" cried she. "And you have no reason, then," said I, "to believe he would be happy to ask it, if he "were not restrained by delicacy?"—"What rea- "son should I have?" replied she. "The ribbon," said I. "All chance," replied she, colouring. "The

" verses," said Edward. " What verses?" cried the eager girl, " I know of no verses." This was a slip of Edward's, for Caroline had never seen the lines. " Oh! you artful creature!" said I, " You " know of no verses?"—" Come, come," said she, " you shall not play upon me. Verses or not verses, " I frankly own to you both, that after a strict ex- " amination of my heart, I am come to a resolution " to remain single all my life—unless—"—" Enough, " my dear Caroline," cried Edward, " and now, " Towers, read her the verses, to convince her that " Henry also will lead a single life—unless—" I had them in my pocket; I read them; and your Lordship will easily imagine that the measure did not halt upon her ear.

She was in great spirits the whole day; so was Madame de St. Valeri, who seems all candour. " I " was sorry for St. Valeri," said she: " I shed tears " for him, but they were the tears of pity, not of " fond regret. I hope I behave myself decently, " but I must be happy with my friends." She is a captivating creature, my Lord, with all her irregular notions; and I most devoutly wish that Charles were here to woo her, marry her, and tame her. By the by, this is no bad thought: what say you, my dear Lord, to trying your hand at my art of match-making? I confess I sometimes think with you, that Charles's brother is more to her mind than any other man on earth; but I curb the thought, for in spite of her soft looks, she must know it to be sacrilege. It grows late, and I grow sleepy, I will finish my letter in the morning.

* * * * *

A circumstance has occurred this morning, for which I cannot account. Edward left the Elms, before I was up, desiring Caroline to tell me that he

would send me a few lines from Powic-castle. The lines came, accompanied by a letter to Madame de St. Valeri, which she has retired to read. To me he writes verbatim as follows: "Excuse the suddenness of my departure. I have much to say to "Henry. I shall prevail upon him to go with me "to Bevil-lodge, where I have also much to say to "Julia. Expect us back in a few days. I have "written my apology to Madame de St. Valeri."—The apology to Madame de St. Valeri seems, indeed, to be much more extended than that to me, for it was a packet. This is the first time that ever I found Percival's conduct inexplicable. Something has certainly happened between him and this extraordinary friend of yours. She was very lively at supper last night. Whatever it is, he has chosen to leave it in the dark, and so there let it rest for me.

Time calls upon me to conclude this letter, but I must just add, that Caroline has been to inform me, that Madame de St. Valeri, in consequence of a letter she has received, is preparing to set out for town, to join Madame de Rallon, to whom she may be of service. Adieu! I hope your next, which I daily expect, will tell me that Charles is well enough to travel, and that you are going to set out.

LETTER XCVI.

MADAME DE ST. VALERI TO JULIA.

Candour the best means for recovering esteem—Contrition—An extraordinary confession and conversion.

THE letter I am going to write, addressed to any other woman upon earth, would be folly or madness; but to you, Julia, I feel it to be the only wise step left for me to take. How much I love and

esteem you, let the candid confessions of my pen testify; let them also be the proof of the sincerity of my professions, and, if it be possible, let me not lose your friendship, my claim to which, if I have in one instance forfeited it, I hope to regain by the means I am now using.

In a few hours I shall leave your hospitable mansion, which I found the abode of love, virtue, religion, and happiness, and which,—how shall I tell it you?—I attempted last night to change into that of remorse and misery. I thank God, and your husband's honour, that I was unable to effect it. All the remorse, all the misery, has justly fallen upon the head of the projector; and, while I leave your dwelling as I found it, I carry with me the consciousness of not meriting the continuation of your friendship. I think, however, of Julia, and it soothes me; I know her greatness of soul, and I will emulate it. Oh! forgive me, and assist in establishing in my mind the resolutions that have been inspired by the conduct of your Edward. I have flattered myself with the hope of recovering even your good opinion, by treating you with an ingenuousness on this humiliating topic, equal to the frankness with which I have at times so boldly supported sentiments, at which I hope in future to blush on recollection, and by removing from Mr. Percival's mind all doubt, whether it becomes him to be silent altogether to you, respecting an occurrence on which my fame, and, perhaps, my honour, depends: if by my conduct I make even this secret unnecessary to be kept from his Julia, I trust I have made a good step towards recovering her esteem.

It is said, that a man must expect the resentment of a woman, whose proffered love he has repulsed; and I believe it to be a just remark: but, it must be a woman repulsed in a very different manner from

that which I have experienced, and with a mind still more lost to virtue than mine. Believe me, dear Julia, that I have never been more than half a libertine, and even that half was owing more to the weak and thoughtless people with whom my early years were passed, and to the sophistry of the books I read, than to any bias I received from nature. Indeed, it is no wonder that I imbibed mistaken ideas of liberty and love, when, from the practice of some, and the preaching of others, I was persuaded that the restraints of custom were unnatural shackles, from which the whole animated creation was free, mankind alone excepted.

Conviction has reached my soul; but would it ever be believed, that it is by one of the handsomest young men of the age my mind has been taught that custom is, in general, the habits of reason; that those habits form the genuine nature of man; and that nothing is more unnatural in a female than a disregard to modesty, chastity, and fidelity? This I have learned from Percival, from your Edward, and that in the most delicate, refined, and soothing manner, when in the madness of my imagination I had tricked myself out to ensnare him in his Julia's absence. Yes, Julia, I blush while I confess it, I had long planned an essay on your husband's heart, which the consciousness of his character has often averted. I was captivated with his person the first moment I saw him, and he has hitherto remained unrivalled in my imagination. His virtues and your beauty, more than your marriage, deprived me of every hope, and I rushed into matrimony with poor St. Valeri, with a determination to fly from Percival.

The determination had no effect, for it was founded on no principle. I renewed our correspondence: circumstances brought me nearer to him; and it

was impossible to resist your invitation to be under the same roof. Here did I watch the progress of natural love: here did I see how fully you were in possession of his heart: but my disposition never had a tendency to despondence, nor was my passion a wound that rankled. I saw no crime in endeavouring to divide with you emotions which I did not conceive would be injured by participation: such a simpleton was I in the knowledge of true love!

It would be unpardonable, dear Julia, to descend into a description of my effort to seduce your husband: suffice it to say, that I managed an opportunity of being alone with him, and that I endeavoured to fascinate his senses, and to triumph over his heart. But glory in him, glory in your Edward, glory in your own charms; for I endeavoured in vain. You know him well, and will easily conceive what passed; but, as an addition to your triumph, I send you the enclosed letter which I have received from him, and let these words, "I have no heart "but that which is already united to my Julia's," secure the pardon of the repentant Emma de St. Valeri. If you knew what different feelings are now in possession of her heart you would not hesitate to forgive and take her to yours: but I am conscious that a little time is necessary to prepare both of us for the sight of each other; I shall therefore leave the Elms. I have pretended to Caroline and the gentlemen that I am called to town to be of use to my sister-in-law, and that I shall bid you adieu by this letter.

Before we meet again I will assure you of my having obtained a complete conquest over emotions that I have encouraged on the most erroneous of systems, which I once deemed to be that of nature. I am sensible that my heart is not to be broken by

its sensations of this kind; there is too much native gaiety in it. I see the truth of what Percival once told me, that it is my *head* that leads me astray: my heart I now firmly believe would not lead me to be criminal. I am certain I shall soon be able to sustain my friendship with your husband unmingled with passion; and when you think so too, and not till then, will I see you both. The meeting will cost me a painful blush, but I cannot resign the friendship of an Edward and a Julia. God bless you both! Adieu!

LETTER XCVII.

PERCIVAL TO MADAME DE ST. VALERI.

(Enclosed in the foregoing.)

The basis of woman's happiness—Passions not to be trifled with—Ninon de L'Enclos—Madame de Lambert—The passions.

You will be better pleased at my absence to-day, than if I had remained at the Elms, and you need not be uneasy at the appearance of it, for Caroline and Towers suppose me gone on a very important business, which is the fact.

And now, what am I to think of our interview last night? am I to congratulate *you* on the triumph of your reason, and *myself* on the continuation of your friendship; or, am I to suppose, that in avoiding to press you with the ardour of passion, and in mastering my own sensations, I have rendered myself ridiculous in your eyes, and lost the valuable part of your affection? I will not suppose the latter. The conquest was all your own: you commanded me to

be careful of you, and I but obeyed that virtue, which, in spite of all you have said, I find so very dear to you. Oh! may you preserve it for ever! It is the basis of your happiness; it is, I may almost say, the basis of every other virtue in a woman. It is the support of that noble female pride, by which you may secure your own independence, and your dominion over man. The moment it is lost, woman becomes a slave, and remorse and anguish are admitted to her bosom. I trust this will never be the fate of my friend, and I have the less apprehension of it, when I consider the strength she has now displayed.

Still let me advise her not to place her dependance upon her strength, or to risk needless trials. Love, forgive me if I say such love, is the most dangerous of passions for a woman to trifle with. For Heaven's sake, do not think it beneath you to shun even the shadow of a danger, which, if realized, produces lasting misery, a youth at least agitated and suspicious, an old age forlorn and envious. Do you imagine that the other virtues which adorn you at present would accompany you through life? Be assured they would not; be assured that if once you lose the esteem of yourself, which would infallibly be the consequence of indulging an illicit passion, you would become negligent of your mind, and whim and caprice would drive out from your heart all that was noble in it.

Talk no more of Ninon: the taste and spurious dignity she is said to have preserved in the midst of her licentiousness, if true, are singular; and, although I give you credit for great powers of mind, my observation of your character leads me to think, that you would give way to poignant reflections, and reproach yourself for weakness and error, rather than attempt to pursue the footsteps of a Ninon.

Oh! listen in preference to another Frenchwoman, who says;—" L'exemple de celles qui se sont re-" lachées, les malheurs qui les ont suivies de si près, " suffiroient pour arreter le penchant le plus rapide; " car il n'y a pas une femme galante, qui, si elle " veut être sincere, ne vous avoue que c'est le plus " grand malheur du monde que de s'être oubliée." This, this is truth and nature; that nature which exalts itself to the standard of human beings.

Do not misunderstand me; I am not so severe as to condemn the frailties of women, with that unrelenting spirit which the world does; but I am convinced that all the gratifications the passions can afford will never compensate to any woman, you particularly, for the loss of that dignity, of that conscious pride, which is the most amiable, and most refined enjoyment of the female mind. You cannot think me a mere preacher, an unfeeling, cold, inanimated mass: No, I love, and love most warmly, which could not be the case, were I able to divide my heart.

Are our passions, say you, given to render us miserable? Nothing was ever given for the purpose of misery by him who is the Giver of all good. Our passions are not given to render us miserable. He who gave them, also gave us intellect, by which, if they are regulated, they prove comforts, joys, delights; mould them to HUMAN NATURE, and they are blessings: drop the dominion of intellect, they are the passions of a lower nature, and become calamities to man. Compare the anger of Canute, rebuking his flatterers at the sea-side, with that of Alexander stabbing Clytus: the former is the passion of a man, the other is worse than the rage of a tyger. So is it with all the other passions, they are the passions of rational beings, or the passions of brutes. That over which you have gained a victory,

is of all others the most seducing. You are, in my opinion, formed to partake of it in its most delightful state; I mean the state to which it is raised by a reciprocity of heart, and which it is not in my power to offer, for I have no heart but that which is already united to my Julia's. You will, ere long perhaps, see the man, who, having one to spare, may be worthy of yours. Time is passing quickly, and while you are sacrificing a portion of it to the name of St. Valeri, you may meet the object whom Providence intends for you. You have many sentiments now, which time and circumstances will make you alter; and, if by my advice and conduct, I shall have been happy enough to have assisted you in fortifying your mind, and fixing your passions within the limits of happiness and reason, I shall be exquisitely gratified, and you will hereafter bless me, and hold me as a friend in the real sense of the word.

You tell me that when you retire to your closet, you can fix your soul on its Creator, and that you often do. And shall such a woman be lost? No! May he on whom you can at times fix your soul, interpose in your behalf, and enable you to pass the whole of your life in conformity to his will! And may you never more plunge yourself into emotions which must, if yielded to, inevitably remove you farther and farther from him, till the thought of him will be no longer agreeable to you, till you wish it possible to be hidden altogether from him, and even till you begin to hope and to believe, as others have done, that you had no Creator at all. This is something like a continuation of my former sermons to you, but the reflections arise from the noble expressions that graced your lips at our parting. I should rejoice to blow into a flame the sparks of piety with which your bosom naturally glows.

The propriety of my being absent, cannot but be obvious to you. Recover yourself, and be firm, I beseech you. When I return, I will appear to have forgotten the event of last night, and I will endeavour to forget it in reality. Let me repeat, do not be uneasy as to the appearance at the Elms. Even of Julia you need not be apprehensive; I own to you I am in the habit of showing her all that passes in my bosom; but silence on a subject of this nature would never, even on discovery, give her pain. I have communications of the utmost consequence to make to Henry Tankerville, which will be a sufficient veil for my going from home. Adieu! Cease not to be my friend, and believe me most truly yours.

LETTER XCVIII.

JULIA TO MADAME DE ST. VALERI.

Love unattended with jealousy—The proselyte absolved.

THANK you again and again, and a thousand times thank you, my dearest Emma, for the charming letter you have sent me. It has completed my happiness; not by the new proof of my Edward's love, for of that my conviction was full, but by the success heaven has granted to his anxious wishes of counteracting the erroneous notions you had early imbibed, for the issue of which he and others of your friends have been trembling. Oh! how you have charmed me! such a mind as yours could not but prove worthy of such a tutor as my Edward; and God be praised, my dear girl, for having directed you to a spirit like his!

Talk not of my forgiveness, I entreat you, but when you would have me talk in return of your excellence in every thing. I knew your heart was not wrong; I knew that all you wanted was to have your understanding convinced; and that being effected, how high upon the scale of human nature do you stand! You have long fascinated my affection, Emma, and you now enter into the full possession of my esteem. Be assured that, on my part, no time is necessary to prepare me to see you, and I hope you will not require much to let me press you to my bosom, in acknowledgment for the delight you have given it.

I send you back Edward's letter. It is yours, and you are to do with it as you please, but I will frankly tell you my opinion. As the just and charming sentiments it contains are now so fully impressed upon your mind, I think you had better not keep it. My reason is, I wish the circumstance to which it alludes to fade away from your remembrance. Your mind is free from guilt, and no recurrence is necessary for a repentance rendered groundless by the expansion of your virtues. Banish it therefore from your thought, and look forward to a happiness you deserve. We shall soon follow you to town, where I hope you will receive with open arms, and with the confidence of conscious integrity,

Your affectionate friend,

JULIA PERCIVAL.

LETTER XCIX.

LORD DIGBY TO PHILIP TOWERS.

The route he proposes to take—A painful remembrance—Henry Tankerville provided with a father if he should want one—Lord Digby enters upon the office of match-maker.

Dear Philip,

I HAVE been writing a long letter to Percival in answer to the kind one I received from him at Ostend, and as I know he communicates his letters to you, I shall send you but a word or two to acknowledge the pleasure your packets have given me. There can be no doubt that Lord Chopstone had the poison conveyed to Stanhope. I agree with you that he has more art than Sir Richard Brainless, but I think it a moot point which of the two has the sounder judgment. What a different being is young Henry! Are they of the same species? If you will not permit me to drive them back to the genus, but force me to admit them into the species, at least allow that I ask not so great a privilege as they who exclude some of the same shape on account of the texture of the epidermis; for surely the texture of the brain and the properties of the heart are much juster limits. I thank you for the Baronet's letter; it is a jewel of its kind worthy of preservation, and Henry's verses are a fine foil for it.

You will be happy to hear that Charles is in a state to travel. We shall soon leave this place, and proceed northwards to the Hague, where I hope to find a letter from you. Our route through Holland is now rendered necessary by the war with England; but we had previously determined upon it; for I found that Stormont and Mr. Parker in their way through the Netherlands met many interruptions,

and were often strictly searched. Poor St. Valeri! he was nobody's enemy but his own. I am sorry for *him*, though I cannot say I am sorry for *his widow*.

I have this moment received your letter containing the Derbyshire extracts, but I have not time to answer it; I shall only say that Henry's situation cuts me to the heart. Oh! Towers! twenty years ago I lost my Harriet before we had been married a year, and with her a little innocent parricide. I have never ceased to mourn them since. The child, had it lived, might now perhaps have been such another youth as Henry: a finer fellow he could not have been. I admire and love this boy as much as if he were my own: say not then that he is the son of no one, for I want but his consent to adopt him as mine. But I must not yield precipitately to my affections. General Tankerville is softened, and it is perhaps better that he should continue to be thought Henry Tankerville, both by himself and the world. I will not be officious then, but should he ever want a father while I live, he shall find him in me. How happy shall I be to see him united to Caroline! Charles says so too. By the by, I have already begun the match-making scheme you recommend, by telling Charles that you are looking out for a wife for him. He bids me tell you, that if you find one but half as amiable as Julia, he shall have no objection. We shall travel but slowly, therefore you need be in no haste to write. Three weeks hence will be time enough. Adieu!

LETTER C.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY.

The Elms in spring—A son's delight—A lover's rapture—Accounts from Derbyshire—General Tankerville's consent withdrawn—A visit—Pegasus mounted—An important arrival—A concert—The speed of imagination—A discovery—Conclusion.

My dear Lord, Elms.

Your last I received in town, where our party assembled soon after I sent you my letter enclosing the Derbyshire extracts. Henry Tankerville, for so is it resolved that he is to remain, accompanied us, and we have spent a gay six weeks. But now, that

> From the moist meadow to the wither'd hill,
> Led by the breeze, the vivid verdure runs,
> And swells and deepens to the cherish'd eye,

we have left the town,

> Buried in smoke, and sleep, and noisome damps,
> To wander o'er the dewy fields,
> Where freshness breathes.

You are acquainted with the taste of our Percivals for Sylvan and Floral delights, and will not therefore be surprised to find us again at the Elms,

> To see the country, far diffus'd around,
> One boundless blush, one white empurpled show'r,
> Of mingled blossoms.

I make no apology for quoting our favourite rural bard, whose descriptions and philanthropy are often brought into my mind by the scenes of nature, and

the effects of benevolence that adorn this happy spot. We returned yesterday, and I have begun my letter to meet you at the Hague; but I shall not dispatch it till the end of next week, as I know that will be time enough. Meanwhile I will commit to my paper occurrences on which you will, I am certain, delight to turn your mind after it has been kept on the stretch by the contemplation of gigantic events, in which the wholeglobe is interested; as the eye delights, after it has dwelt with wonder on "Snowdon's shaggy side," to relieve the extended nerve by contracting it to the beauty of a verdant glade.

Before we went to town, Percival opened his plan to Henry, related to him the change in General Tankerville's mind, without alluding to the painful circumstances that had come to his knowledge, and expressed his wish that he would endeavour to gain Caroline's affections, that he might enjoy the happiness of calling him his brother. Edward told me that he never saw joy so beautifully painted as on Henry's countenance when he told him the change in Tankerville's heart, and he would have set off immediately for Derbyshire, had not Percival restrained him. So precipitate a step was to be prevented for two reasons; the one was, that the alteration in the General was only from passion to virtue, not from unaccountable aversion to paternal raptures; the other was, that Henry's grandfather, old Davenport, having fallen into a state of total imbecility, his mother had declared her intention to the General of not informing him of it. Edward therefore prevailed upon him to be patient, to leave to him the management of their next interview, and in the meantime to think only of Caroline.

When he proposed to him his addressing his sister, his joy was still more rapturous; he caught him in

his arms, and declared he loved her with an ardency which could have been restrained from a discovery only by his forlorn situation at the time he became acquainted with her, and in which he had ever since existed.—"But now," cried he, "that I have a "father who not barely owns me, but will receive "me as a son, and as he is a man not beneath your "alliance, with what ecstacy do I hear you propose "a bliss that would have formed my warmest prayer "to heaven." He then appeared anxious as to the state of Caroline's heart. Edward assured him that she had ever spoken warmly of him. "That I be-"lieve," said he; "for I know not whether she "excels more in beauty or virtue, and perhaps it is "virtue that guides her to speak so warmly, but "gratitude is not love." Edward said it was a delicate point to speak upon decidedly, but that if his judgment was not much mistaken, the latter either lurked in her heart, or he might kindle it there. "Then, my friend," exclaimed he, "I will "endeavour to discover it; and if your judgment be "true, even you will not be a happier man than "Henry Tankerville."

The progress of Love now became rapid, and before Henry and Caroline had been a week together in London, a mutual avowal took place, and rendered them happy beings. Of this Edward took care to inform the General, from whom he received a concerted answer, expressing his pleasure and his intentions towards his son. This revived Henry's anxiety to return to Derbyshire; but on the arrival of his friend Wollaston, who brought him a letter from Mrs. Tankerville, relative to his grandfather's state, and entreating him not to return till he heard again from her, he readily resigned himself to the sweet delirium of his passion, and to attendance upon Caroline, whom he escorted to all the places of public

amusement, and elegant circles of fashion, where it was a disputed point whether the scale of beauty and happiness preponderated on the side of the married or unmarried lovers, and where every one talked with astonishment of General Tankerville's having entirely concealed so graceful a youth from the world.

Wollaston had quitted his curacy, being now presented to a living in Buckinghamshire, and was come to town to meet the family of the young lady to whom he is soon to be married, and who prove to be old acquaintances of mine. They are the Altons of Hilsden, in Buckinghamshire, people of small but independent fortune. We acknowledged one another, and I had the pleasure of introducing them to our whole party. Henry was greatly affected on hearing from his friend the state of his grandfather's decline; and, recollecting the kindnesses he had received from him in his infancy, he was anxious to give the old gentleman the pleasure of seeing him grateful; but the intelligence of his being past all remembrance considerably relieved his anxiety; and the more so as Wollaston assured him that his return at present would probably disconcert some arrangements planned by his mother, who had come back to the General's for two days. He also told him that he had seen his father and mother together, and that there was evidently much more harmony between them than he had ever witnessed before.

About ten days before we left town, Henry received another letter from Mrs. Tankerville, informing him of the death of Mr. Davenport, and promising him to lose no time, consistent with decency, in attending to his happiness, still charging him not to return into Derbyshire; a charge which Henry was no longer sorry to receive. He finds the Elms far more attractive. The beech, and the

rivulet, and Cowper's farm, have charms that surpass all that the metropolis can offer even in this its gayest season. Julia, who knows what it is to be a lover, has written to press Mrs. Bevil to come to her, that she may be no restraint on Caroline's walks with Henry, and I have urged Bevil to come over to us.

Your charming friend Madame de St. Valeri was entreated to accompany the party down, but she excused herself for the present, promising as the season advanced to pass some time at the Elms: so did Monsieur and Madame de Rallon and the little Rosa. What spirit can regret the loss of a great town, who looks on such a country as I see through the window before me, who sees a village, in every house of which dwells happiness, and who cannot cast his eye upon a spot that does not bring to mind the virtues of his friend? *Sic mihi rura placent.*

* * * * * * * * *

Joy! joy! my Lord! joy! and triumph! Io! Io! Pæan! Io! Triumphe!—Now, my life for it, you think, Digby, that I am going to give you some news of the day of marriage being settled, and the hope of a copy of verses in consequence. Oh for shame! blush for your vulgar ideas, when I tell you that General Tankerville has withdrawn his consent to the marriage of Henry with Caroline; and that, far from adhering to the resolutions he took in conjunction with Percival, the paltry three hundred a-year he settled on our young friend is to be——but hear before you judge too harshly of him.

When I laid down my pen, it was to go and pay my compliments to Lord Powic, who, in his ride, hearing of our arrival from one of the servants, had extended his airing to the Elms. The old Lord's attachment to Henry has grown stronger and stronger

since the memorable day of his first visit at Powiccastle, and he seems to have included in his affection the whole party, the villain Stanhope excepted. He was happy beyond expression on hearing of the proposed marriage of Henry and Caroline, with the latter of whom he is almost as much smitten as with the former. The old man looked well, and was in great spirits. He declared he would give a feast on the wedding, for he considered them both as his children, and said he had repented of all his sins but two, and they grew upon him: envy of General Tankerville, and detestation of his own nephew, whom he thanked God, he had not seen since he heard the rumour of his connexion with the scoundrel who was gone to answer for his crimes. Before the Earl left us, he engaged us to spend a day with him, and as he pressed it to be soon, it was fixed for the beginning of the week, and yesterday appointed.

Two days after this engagement was formed passed in new and increasing happiness, and an answer from the Bevils, that they would join us in a few days, arrived to add to our joy. Henry gave Caroline his verses, and I was myself sketching an epithalamium, when on the third day comes a frost, a killing frost, and nips the root of our ripening schemes. In short, my Lord, Edward received a short letter from General Tankerville, in which he declared, that on a conversation with Mrs. Tankerville, he found that he had been too hasty in his resolutions respecting Henry, to whose marriage it was not in his power to consent. He confessed, however, that this required an explanation, and as he not only owed it to Percival, but was extremely anxious that the friendship they had contracted should prove lasting, he requested to be received as a friend at the Elms, where he hoped to present

himself in a few days to clear up whatever new mystery might appear in his conduct. My Lord, this letter vexed us exceedingly, but as the explanation was so soon to take place, Edward confined the participation of his chagrin to Julia and myself, and, being resolved on effecting the marriage of Henry and Caroline, he said nothing to interrupt their daily visits to the beech, where the young enthusiast now read his Pleasures of Imagination with a double relish. They were made to expect General Tankerville soon, but that was all.

I cannot tell you with what anxiety we kalendared the hours that formed the interval between the General's letter and his arrival; and when the day of our engagement with Lord Powic came, Edward hesitated whether he should apologize or not; but at last concluded by giving orders privately to Thomas, to receive the General, if he should come while we were at Powic-castle, and to ride over as fast as he could to inform him of it. My Lord, I must here mount Pegasus.

Now bright Sol—suppose the sun in Taurus if you please—Now bright Sol arose resplendent in the east, and onward drove his chariot to the south; an universal glow pervaded Nature; lambs were skipping, birds were warbling, heifers were bounding, colts were scampering, shepherds were piping, milkmaids were singing, the very hills and fields were smiling, and e'en the gales that o'er them blew, were waving fresh their gladsome wing, redolent of joy.—Here, my Lord, I must dismount, and when in humble prose I have told you the events of the day, I beg you will spare me the trouble of backing the winged animal again, by supposing that bright Sol continued his course as resplendent as he began it, and that after setting out from the yellow east, and climbing the fervid summit of the south,

he reluctantly descended in the west, on whose rosy horizon his extending rays long lingered in skirts of burnished gold.

And now, my dear Digby, come back a little to the participation of our chagrin, and, leaving the skies and the path of the sun, take the way with us to Powic-castle. The Earl had made it a point that we should go over early to pass the whole day with him. In the coach went the Bevils, who had joined us the day before, with Julia and Stockton; the post-chaise was given to the lovers, and Edward and I rode on horseback. Percival was not in spirits; the contents of General Tankerville's letter hung upon his thoughts. "Surely," said he, as we were on the way, "surely, Towers, this must be the ef-"fect of habit: but we must not let his prepossess-"sions overturn so much happiness. I will see him "first; he will, perhaps, yield to me as he did be-"fore." Lord Powic received us with great warmth. I believe I have told you that he delights in music, and is highly gratified with hearing Henry take a part on the violoncello. After some conversation, he told us, that as we had promised to come early, he had prepared to treat us with a little concert before dinner, and he desired Henry to tune his bass. Bevil took a violin, Julia the harpsichord, and there were several musicians hired to accompany.

The performers were arranging their parts, when we saw a man in Percival's livery riding full gallop towards the house; he proved to be Thomas. Edward, convinced that he came to announce the arrival of General Tankerville, went out to speak to him alone.

He brought word that both the General and Mrs. Tankerville were at the Elms, but they had desired that no message might be sent to interrupt us. Edward called me out, and we agreed that the meet-

ing between Henry and the General required some management: he proposed to go himself to the Elms immediately, and that I should prepare Henry before the party returned in the evening. Lord Powic, suspecting that Percival was sent for, joined us, and said that he hoped nothing had occurred to take him away. Edward told him the fact, at which he seemed highly pleased, and earnestly pressed that the Tankervilles should be sent for. Percival observed, that as their coming must depend upon themselves, he would go over to the Elms, and bring them if they would come. To this my Lord consented, on condition of his returning if they would not accompany him. The Earl, on being informed that Edward had reasons for wishing that I should prepare Henry for the meeting, promised to say nothing of it to the party, to let the concert proceed, and to give me an opportunity of talking with Henry before the General could be at Powic-castle. He also ordered four horses to be put to his own coach, to carry Edward for his new friends—"Are they not the parents of my boy," said he, "and shall I not open my heart to them?" At first Percival thought it a point of good manners, that Julia should accompany him, to wait on Mrs. Tankerville, and Lord Powic had agreed to the propriety of it, when it was found impracticable, without giving the alarm to Henry; and this it was thought, would be admitted as a sufficient apology. The carriage was ordered not to drive up to the door, and while it was getting ready, Edward returned with us to the room, from which he slipped at the opening of a concerto of Haydn's.

The music was delightful. The sisters, with Bevil and Henry, sang a charming quartuo, and Caroline afterwards gave a solo song, with such pathos and expression, that the old Lord in his rap-

ture could not resist pressing her to him, and calling her his daughter. The morning passed agreeably, till I thought time called upon me to enter on my conversation with Henry, and I took him into the garden. "My dear young friend," said I, "you are too happy: do you think that you are now "to swim smoothly along the current of life, basking in the beams of Love, and meet no more "rubs?"—"I am in the hands of Providence," said he, smiling; "and I confess to you that I have no "fears of his interrupting my happiness—With "what soul did Caroline give her song! did not the "melody of her cadence, and the shake with which "it concluded, thrill through your whole frame?" —"It thrilled through yours, I perceive, Henry," replied I, "and may the sensations prove my auxiliaries, in keeping your feelings unhurt by the less "agreeable sounds I am going to offer to your ear! "It is probable that General and Mrs. Tankerville "will be here in the course of an hour."—"Good "Heaven! you surprise me, indeed; my mother? "but, surely, these are not disagreeable sounds."— "Your mother was equally unexpected by me; you "know the General's intention; but I think it necessary to tell you, that there is again some change "in his mind, and therefore I would have you not "be in the way, till we know the result of his interview with Percival, who is gone to meet him, "and bring him hither. I can hardly, however, "think he will come, unless he intends to meet you "affectionately."—"Good God!" exclaimed he, "what can this mean? My father and mother coming to Powic-castle! Surely General Tankerville "cannot design to gratify his aversion, by annihilating me!"—"Annihilating you, Henry!"— "Oh, yes! the loss of Caroline would be annihilation. The man, I will not call him father, has

"always hated me, hated me for no cause what-
"ever. In the name of God, why did he give me
"life, only that he might devise means to render it
"miserable? Be assured, Towers, I will not now
"relinquish Caroline. No power on earth can di-
"vide our hearts, no power on earth shall separate
"our hands."—"My dear fellow," said I, "your
"imagination outruns the evil; but, be it what it
"may, I am confident that Henry will meet it as he
"ought."—"But do, my friend," cried he, "tell
"me what you know: has he said any thing respect-
"ing Caroline?"—"It is a painful task," said I.—
"What is?" cried he.—"Be calm, I beseech you,"
said I; "you must compose your spirits before I
"can answer you."—I will be calm," he replied;
"but tell me, does he intend to prevent my mar-
"riage?"—"He cannot prevent it long," said I;
"but I fear he does not mean to consent to it."—
"Why do you think so? pray tell me."—"They
"were his words in a letter to Percival."—"Then—"
he bit his lips: "No, I will not forget myself," ex-
claimed he; "he is my father: though he forgets
"his nature, I will not forget mine." I did every
thing I could to sooth and pacify him: and on my
repeating my observation, that it would not be long
in his power to prevent his marrying, he became
calm. I did not, however, leave him to imagine
that I thought he would be precipitate in his oppo-
sition to his father; for although I knew that there
was no such tie between them, he did not. He
shook me by the hand, and said, "Towers, I will
"first do every thing in my power to conciliate him."

Finding him temperate, I proposed to go in and
send Caroline to him, at the same time warning him
not to make her uneasy. He thanked me, and hur-
ried me away. On my return to the parlour, I
found the party I left, expecting the coach every

minute; and I desired Caroline, who I saw was agitated at the thoughts of being presented to the Tankervilles, to go and keep Henry in the garden till the first salutations were over.

Another hour elapsed, and we began to suspect that the General had declined joining the party, when we saw the carriage at a distance. It was very soon after at the door, and I had the pleasure of seeing Edward smile as he handed Mrs. Tankerville out. They were followed by the General. I observed her trembling as Percival led her forward, to present her to Lord Powic, and I was just in time to catch her in my arms, and prevent her falling on the floor. The violent ringing of the bell, and the call for water, soon reached the ears of Henry and of Caroline; they were both in the room in an instant; and Henry, snatching his beautiful mother from me, bore her in his arms to the sopha, knelt beside her, and with a brow loaded with anxiety, wildly besought her to revive. "Oh! "my mother! I beseech you to recover yourself, I "beseech you to look at your Henry." As he held one hand, Caroline softly approached and rubbed the other, while the old Earl himself held the salts to her. The windows were all thrown up, and an anxious silence ensued. At length, after a deep sigh, she opened her eyes, which met those of her supporters. She looked at them alternately for near a minute, then raising herself upon the sopha, she clasped them to her bosom, kissed them again and again, and prayed a thousand blessings on their heads.

Every one of us was affected, and the Earl's cheeks were bedewed with his tears; on observing which, Mrs. Tankerville fixed her mild yet expressive eyes upon him, and said, "Oh! my Lord, those "tears are to me a presage of your joy. Yes, Lord "Powic, I come to give you joy, if you deserve it;

" to you who have been the direst enemy of my " life, I come to offer peace ; to you who have made " me shed the bitterest tears of woe, I bring the " sweetest smiles of the heart; to you, who robbed " me of my husband, I come to restore a son.—Lord " Coteridge lives."—" Speak quickly," cried the Earl.—" Lives," continued she, taking Henry by the hand, " in this youth: look at him, and deny " him if you can."

Dear Digby, you will more easily conceive than I can express the effect of this scene on the group that formed a semicircle round the transported mother, who had now risen, and was presenting her son to his grandfather. " Oh! powerful Nature!" cried Powic, and threw himself into Henry's arms; " but how—explain—tell me how, quickly, for I " fear my tottering faculties will hardly serve me to " obtain the knowledge."—" Be assured, my Lord," said Henry's mother, " that you have in your arms " the son of Lord Coteridge, and your Lordship's " legal heir." Henry pressed the old man to his heart, but uttered not a word. Mrs. Bevil, observing a change of countenance in the Earl, begged him to sit down, and to drink some of the water that had been brought for Mrs. Tankerville. He immediately complied, and it had a happy effect; his nerves recovered their tone, his blood returned to its proper channels, and a placid smile took possession of his face. He then looked at Henry, and turning to his mother, exclaimed, " I dare not be- " lieve myself so happy—prove him to be my heir, " and I will kneel and kiss your feet."—" My " Lord," replied she, " I have taken care that his " title shall be as clear as your own." The Earl now looked at Tankerville. " Nothing can be more " true, my Lord," said the General; " I am happy " in assuring you, that I am convinced of it; and " while I say so, I believe there never was a more

" virtuous woman than she whose truth I now af-
" firm. But, my Lord, the clearest proofs will be
" produced, and I am truly delighted at finding
" your heart so much engaged by one worthy to be
" the son of Lord Coteridge. Oh! Henry," con-
tinued he, " forgive my past conduct, which was
" the effect of my early conviction that I had not the
" honour of being your father." Henry darted for-
ward, and embraced the General, crying, " Oh!
" Sir! it is I that must ask forgiveness for my intru-
" sion."—" That part was mine, Henry," said Mrs.
Tankerville; " but our pardon has already been
" granted."

" The more I think," said the Earl, " the more
" I wonder: if secrecy were thought necessary at
" first, why continue it so long?"—" To answer your
" question, my Lord, would be to rehearse my
" story. Perhaps your Lordship anticipates the
" name to which I was born?"—" I was too well
" acquainted with the strength and constancy of
" my son's passion, to doubt that I now see Sophia
" Davenport. Spare my old heart," continued he,
" it has already atoned for yielding so completely to
" the dominion of my pride."—" My Lord," said
she, " I never blamed you; for it was natural for
" you to wish a higher-born bride for your son; nor
" did I aspire to your rank. My own father's pride
" was more unaccountable than yours; for he took
" pride in despising your alliance, and the language
" used on both sides produced that insurmountable
" aversion, which deprived *your* son and *his* daughter
" of every hope but in a clandestine marriage.
" Lord Coteridge won my heart,—you do not won-
" der at that, my Lord!—and he blessed me with a
" mutual love. Still, on finding his passion at va-
" riance with his interest and his duty, I sincerely
" dissuaded him from yielding to the impulse of his

" heart: again and again I referred him to you. I " will not bring to mind your Lordship's firmness " on the occasion."—" Lovely woman!" said Lord Powic, in a low voice, which he did not intend to be heard. " My father," continued she, " was no " less firm; and, at a tender moment, Coteridge " obtained my consent to give him my hand private- " ly. Having determined upon this, he told me of " the difficulty that was to be overcome, and that " it was impossible to obtain a license, as I was " under age.

" I have a friend who lives in a distant parish in " the same county, and whom I frequently visited " for a month or six weeks at a time. Lord Cote- " ridge had made both her and her husband his " friends also; and on consulting with her, she sug- " gested the plan of publishing the banns of marri- " age at the populous village near which she re- " sided. My father, whose temper, though stern, " was never suspicious, allowed me to go and stay " some time with the lady I allude to: Coteridge " lodged at a farmer's in the parish; our names " were regularly called thrice in time of service, " and when the requisite period expired, we were " married at the church, in the presence of my friend " and of her husband, who performed the office of a " father to me, andal so in the presence of the farm- " er and his wife, whom Coteridge invited, with a " view of having a sufficient number of witnesses. " Our names were properly registered in the vestry " book, and a certificate of the marriage given to " me. The clergyman who performed the cere- " mony, who was then a young curate, and all the " other persons that were present, except the clerk " and the farmer, are still living; the certificate is " now in the possession of General Tankerville, and " has been seen by Mr. Percival.

" But, clear as the evidence of my marriage is, I " have to account to you, my Lord, for my unwea- " ried resolution in keeping it so long secret. " Whether you think my motives deserve praise " or blame, I shall submit them to you. I cannot " look back to those days of youthful felicity which " were passed in stolen interviews with Coteridge, " without still condemning myself, and lamenting " the want of paternal sanction; and I have always " considered the misery that followed as the decree " of Providence, to punish the crimes of disobe- " dience and insincerity of which we were both " guilty. I extended my visit at my friend's to a " whole month after our marriage, and we were " loitering on the very verge of discovery, when her " prudence forced us asunder. We vowed an eter- " nal constancy, anticipated a future meeting, and " solemnly promised each other not to disclose our " marriage but by mutual consent. I engaged him " to this, because I feared that the vivacity of his " temper would overcome his patience, and I con- " fess, my Lord, I less dreaded your anger, than the " unhappiness of my own father, who would sooner " have seen me dead, or have died himself, than " have heard I was the wife of your son.

" I loved my father with the warmest affection " that ever daughter felt. I could not do other- " wise; he had ever been to me truly a parent; he " had the fondness of a mother for his children, yet, " on points of rectitude, he was the sternest of fa- " thers: so much the more did he rivet my affec- " tion, for it was the love of the heart justified and " exalted by reason. Beguiled by my attachment " to Coteridge, I thought him unjustly rigid; but " when I disposed of my hand, it was with the deter- " mination of using every effort to reconcile him to " it, before I acknowledged the step I had taken.

" On my return home, I found his apprehensions " of Coteridge were renewed. With tears in his " eyes he besought me not to bring him to the " grave by a union which he could not survive; and " he so wrought upon my heart, that I weakly and " wickedly gave him an equivocal promise, that I " *would not* marry the son of Lord Powic. He was " satisfied with my promise, and became the hap- " piest of men. I resolved to sacrifice my own " happiness to his, and the tenor of my correspond- " ence with my husband will show how much I had " it at heart. The letters are now in possession of " General Tankerville, and they were conveyed " through the channel of the friend I have men- " tioned. Those that I wrote to him, he sent to " me on his leaving England, with a request that I " would carefully preserve them for him.

" The unsuccessful attempts made by both of us " to gain the favour of our parents; my firm resolu- " tion to struggle with my emotions till I could " conciliate my father; your anger, my Lord, and " the improbability of our being able to meet for " some time, inspired him with the sad determina- " tion of leaving England for a short period. On " this he consulted me; nor did I disapprove it; for " little did I think of his spirit leading him to serve " an American campaign, when I received the let- " ter that bade me adieu. That reflection, my " Lord, is too painful to be pursued.

" Before his resolution was taken, I informed " him that he was likely to become a father, and " the letter he wrote to me on that occasion has " been perused both by the General and Mr. Per- " cival. I managed to conceal my situation from " my father a long time, without quitting his house " —alas! added to his unsuspicious temper, the " news of the fate of my husband completely avert-

" ed all suspense. My tears were shed in private,
" while before the family I wore a placid counte-
" nance; but grief preyed the more poignantly on
" my heart. As the time approached for the birth
" of Coteridge's son, I easily prevailed on my father
" to allow me to pay another visit to my friend,
" with whom I had early concerted a plan to elude
" discovery. It was in her house I gave way to
" my sorrow for the death of my husband; there I
" wore my weeds, and in her house was the heir of
" Lord Powic born. In short, my Lord, when
" Henry came into the world, he was received by
" my friend as her son; and while she was attend-
" ing me, my father supposed I was attending her.
" One pretext or another served to blind him till I
" could return home. But the question, the heart-
" breaking question now arose, respecting a nurse
" for my boy. To yield his smiles to another, and
" deprive him of his own right, would have broken
" my heart: I would sooner have encountered my
" father's rage. My friend, adhering to me through-
" out, administered fresh balm, and proposed to ac-
" company me home. The amiable artifice suc-
" ceeded; my friend staid more than two months
" with me, and some affairs calling my father to
" town, I returned with her; and thus had I the
" delight of suckling my boy, till he no longer
" needed a nurse. I then unreluctantly confided
" him to the care of my friend. It was soon after I
" had weaned him, that General Tankerville flat-
" tered me with his attentions.

" I had resolved to pass the remainder of my life
" as the widow of Coteridge, and to conceal the
" birth of his son, till I could discover it without
" rendering my father miserable; but, whenever I
" sounded him, I found him so unalterable, that
" from time to time I postponed the discovery, till

" his death has rendered concealment no longer ne-
" cessary. General Tankerville has forgiven me
" for the artifice I practised, in introducing Henry
" as his son to him, when he returned to England;
" and also for my having married him to gratify a
" parent, rather than in consequence of love. We
" were both culpable in the union, and we have both
" had less happiness than should attend marriage;
" but the late events have expanded our hearts, and
" the spirit of Coteridge would reprove me, were I
" longer to deny him the ardour of regard which
" his conduct now merits."

Here Mrs. Tankerville ceased speaking, and the old Earl, rising from the sopha, threw his arms around her, and cried, " Oh, my daughter! would " to God I had seen you twenty years ago! such " charms and such virtue would surely have subdued " my stubborn heart. But we will weep no more. " Come hither, Harry Powic." He folded Henry in his arms. " My boy," continued he, " let the " world demand and obtain, the incontrovertible " proofs of your title; for me, the greatest proof I " have, or ever shall require, of your being the son " of Coteridge, is the love you bear this angel of a " woman." Henry again embraced his mother. " Tankerville," continued Powic, shaking the General by the hand, " remember she is my daughter. " Oh! what a joyous evening of life will be mine!"

We all wished him joy. He shook hands all round. He pressed Percival to his bosom, and saluted Mrs. Bevil and Julia. When he came to Caroline, whose tears had been flowing copiously, he took her right hand with his left, held her at a little distance from him, gazed at her, and broke out into raptures: " Beautiful Sylph! from what region of " the Heavens hast thou sprung? Comest thou as the " happy genius of these events, to be worshiped

" for thy aid, or art thou, indeed, a mortal?"—" A mortal, indeed, my Lord," cried Caroline.—" A mortal, I trust," said Mrs. Tankerville; " for " Heaven's sake be a mortal, my love, or you will " convert our happiness into woe." Caroline, after being warmly embraced by her lover's grandfather, ran into the arms of his mother, and a general interchange of affection and friendship soon took place throughout the party.

Not a word had passed between Henry and Caroline; and, during the whole of this scene, they had only stolen glances at each other. The Earl looking first at the one and then at the other, said: " No; it is not as I thought. I will confess to you, " my friends, I began to suspect that I had no sooner " found my boy, than I discovered he had followed " the example of his father, in giving his heart " away without my consent"—Caroline's whole face and neck were instantly vermilioned, and Henry gazed upon his grandfather—" But no, he will con- " sole my heart, and let me choose him a bride: I " have one for him in my eye. I will not say I " should have had any objection, had my suspicion " proved true; had he, indeed, exchanged his heart " with you, my dear Miss Percival."—" We have, " by my soul, Sir," said Henry. Caroline's vermilion now became scarlet—" Mr. Percival," said the Earl with astonishment, " do you believe it?" —Edward smiled. " Why, Sir," continued Powic, " I believe she is the only person in the room whom " he has not embraced." The lovers now understood the Earl; their momentary pain was changed into ecstacy, and they rushed into each other's arms, amidst an acclamation of blessings, shouted by the whole party:—" God bless you! God bless " you!"

The news soon ran throughout the house, and

most of the domestics were already assembled in the hall to express their joy. Henry went out to them, and with that dignified familiarity which distinguishes the truly noble mind made them happy by assurances of his attachment. Old William, the huntsman, he shook by the hand. "My Lord," said the old boy, "since the first day I saw you in "that sad black room, where I took you for your "Lordship's ghost, I have never been able to get "it out of my head, that I should one day or other "call you my Lord: and you may ask Triton— "wheugh! Triton, Triton,—if I have not often told "him so, as we walked over the fields together.— "Says I, 'Triton, it's amazement to me that the "Earl can persuade himself it's any other body "than his own Lord Coteridge: for,' says I, 'to put "aside his face, do you mind his motions, and his "way of talking, and his kindness to the servants.' "Well, God bless you, my Lord; and though I am "too cold to hunt a pack of fox-hounds, I'll make "bold to follow your harriers."

Such, my dear Digby, were the events of the morning at Powic-castle, and you will easily believe a happier company never sat down to dinner. The Earl placed Mrs. Tankerville at the head of the table, and sat by her; Henry he sent to the bottom, and bade him take Caroline with him. After dinner, General Tankerville took out of his pocket the packets Edward had seen in Mrs. Tankerville's cabinet; the one addressed to himself he put into Lord Powic's hand, saying, "My Lord, I "will leave this with you for your perusal; but you "will take care of it for me: it contains the story "you have already heard from your daughter, with "some charming reflections on the blame mutually "merited by herself and me in our marrying. "Though my days have been unhappy, I would

"again encounter them for such an issue to my "grief."

From the other packet he selected some of Lord Coteridge's letters, in which there was little or no allusion to the rigour of the parents, and they were read with delight. In putting them up, he presented them to Mrs. Tankerville, who received them with a benign smile, and thanked him. She then produced the miniature of Lord Coteridge, which Edward had seen in her cabinet. It was much admired, but the Earl thought it not so good a resemblance as the portrait in the black-chamber. Mrs. Tankerville expressing a desire to see it, "Heaven "forbid!" cried Henry, who explained to his mother with a most graceful animation and tender concern for the feelings of the old man, the awful and sad expedients of his grandfather's remorse. After he had done, the Earl looked at him, and with a smile said, that if the family of the Percivals, who were superior to forms, would resign the etiquette of the ceremony's being performed at the Elms, he should be married in that chamber. "My dear Lord!" exclaimed Henry. "What!" cried my Lord, "would not Caroline's charms banish gloom from "any spot?"—"True, my Lord," said he, "but "my concern is more for her feelings than my "own."—"But I have set my heart upon it."—"And I second my Lord," said Percival, "and the "Elms shall yield its claim to the wedding to Powic-"castle, on two conditions."—"Name them," said the Earl. "The first," replied Edward, "is, "that the black-chamber be restored to its original "lively appearance, with additional decorations de-"signed by Henry and Caroline."—"To this con-"dition," answered Lord Powic, "I agree, for "this reason, that it was exactly what I intended: "now for the second condition."—"It is," replied

Edward, "that though the wedding be celebrated "in the metamorphosed chamber, the ceremony "shall be performed at the village church."— "Agreed," answered my Lord, "and for this rea- "son, that the propriety of it is undeniable."

I should never conclude, my dear Lord, were I to be circumstantial in the effusions of happiness that crowned this day of joy, I shall therefore draw them to a focus, and tell you that the wedding day was fixed before the party separated. Lord Powic made a point of it with Caroline, who, with genuine sensibility, referred it to Julia and her brother. A look from Henry petitioned their favour, and Percival said: "This day month."—"Sister," said Caroline, taking Julia's hand, "your wedding day "has proved a happy one; it is but six weeks "hence, let it be mine also." The Earl was not inclined to listen to Caroline's amendment, but finding her supported by the other ladies, it was finally fixed that she should become Henry's bride on the anniversary of Percival's marriage. My Lord, you and Charles are expected at the wedding: you have plenty of time to bring you to us. The de Rallons will be there; and also Madame de St. Valeri. Tell Charles I engage him to be her partner in the dance that night, and if he does not then himself engage her for a dance for life, I shall think he will not deserve dancing at all.

THE END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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